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No. 17



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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 15 November 2005**

**Mardi 15 novembre 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 15 November 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 15 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** I rise once again today to talk about the \$23-billion fiscal gap and the fiscal imbalance which has been acknowledged by all three political parties. I was shocked to see John McKay, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, say that there was no fiscal imbalance.

Is there anyone on Parliament Hill, any government MP who is standing up and fighting for people in Ontario? I can tell you, a Conservative government on Parliament Hill will not be the answer to all of the problems of Ontario, but at least we will acknowledge them and we will begin to do the work.

The \$23-billion gap is an issue that all three political parties in this assembly have supported our Premier on. I was there on May 7 to personally support our Premier when he was negotiating with the federal government. But I read with great trepidation a story by Ian Urquhart in the *Toronto Star*. Let's look at where we've been since May 7: "Training for unemployed workers"—nowhere; "Meat inspection"—nowhere; "Kyoto commitments"—nowhere; "Corporate tax collection"—nowhere; "Housing"—nowhere. And because of Joe Volpe's mismanagement and incompetence, he won't provide any information on what he would do for funding for Ontario's new immigrants.

Of the \$5.75 billion promised by Paul Martin to the people of Ontario, not a single dollar has flowed. This is a travesty, and we need to change this. This simply cannot continue. We must begin to at least acknowledge the fiscal imbalance and do good things for the people of Canada and the people of Ontario.

#### SIKH COMMUNITY

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** It's an honour to rise today to acknowledge Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday on this day in 1469—indeed, many moons ago. As the founder and first guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev Ji lived an honest life. He taught others to share their earnings with those who are less for-

tunate and to earn their living with honest labour—values which many hold to be true today.

An extraordinary human being, Guru Nanak Dev Ji was a great prophet of peace, love and truth, but above all, he was a humanitarian in every sense of the word. Perhaps most significantly, Guru Nanak Dev Ji thought of working for the betterment of humanity. Wherever he went, he would spread his divine message of universal love, humanitarian service and the uniqueness of God.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all followers of Guru Nanak Dev Ji a most joyous day and to encourage them and everyone to continue to embrace the teachings of universal love.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge and applaud the many members of the Sikh community who, in keeping with the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, have generously donated their time and food to many food banks within my riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale and the greater Toronto area every year and for the past many years.

#### COURT FACILITY

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The member for—

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** Whitby–Ajax.

**The Speaker:** Whitby–Ajax.

**Mr. Flaherty:** The recently elected member for Whitby–Ajax.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Flaherty:** No. I will have a farewell message at some point, especially for the member from St. Catharines because I know he's into farewells, especially for the honourable member for Nepean and me. He's happy to wish us farewell. That's not the statement I was going to make.

The statement is about the Durham consolidated courthouse, which we're waiting to hear about. The minister responsible for public infrastructure said at committee in September that he had been converted, as had Mr. McGuinty, to public-private partnerships. In fact, they had three consortia, one headed by EllisDon, one headed by PCL and one headed by SNC Lavalin, all set to build the new consolidated courthouse in Durham region, which is one of the most rapidly growing areas not only in Canada, but in all of North America.

We have security concerns. The police associations here today—the PAO and the police officers from Durham region—have security concerns, as the people of



Durham region do, about using an antiquated facility. We have had an alleged murderer escape and try to enter that courthouse, and in people's backyards including my own, and families endangered by that. So we want that courthouse built.

We are waiting for the announcement. We urge the government to get moving forward on the security issue for the good of the people of Durham region and announce the courthouse as soon as possible as a Christmas present to all the people of Durham region.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** In the weeks and months leading up to the last election, you couldn't hear Liberals talk too much about the need for a new Tenant Protection Act. They promised, within 365 days of their election, that there would be a new act. Well, I have to tell you, you are now 409 days late on your commitment and your promise.

In that period of time, 35,000 tenants have been evicted from their homes because of your inaction. In that time, above-guideline increases have affected tens of thousands of people in Ontario because of your inaction. In that time, vacancy decontrol has continued unabated because of your inaction, and in that time, tens of thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of people have seen the total lack of maintenance in the apartments, in the places they call home. Landlords are no longer afraid not to do maintenance. There are cockroaches and mice. There are living conditions no one here would want to live in.

The parliamentary assistant said not to expect anything in this particular session of Parliament. The minister refuses to answer the question about when he will introduce this legislation. I think members opposite should be ashamed they are not carrying out the very promise that helped them get elected by the tenants of Ontario. The time for that act is now.

#### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I want to offer some simple and truly sincere advice to the leader of the official opposition. The member from Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey talks and talks about doing things differently here. Unfortunately, no one seems to know exactly what he means. He talks about consultation. He wants phone calls and e-mails. He wants to feel part of the government as a legislator. Well, here's that simple advice.

Mr. Tory, stop taking advice from your caucus colleagues who were part of the Harris–Eves government. They did things differently. They fought with people. They didn't consult, and now they pretend to tell you exactly how this place should work. Maybe it's like the old days. I don't think we want that.

Here's a guideline for you. Ministers introduce bills. Bills get second reading. And here's the big surprise: They go to committees for public hearings. They get

amended and come back to the House. They get debated and put to a vote. The majority wins and the bill is carried, to become law.

**1340**

Now, I know your caucus has a hard time with this concept and that's why they're heckling. They were used to ramming legislation through this House. They didn't even know what standing committees were used for, and they didn't want to debate. No, they just wanted to shove that legislation down the people of Ontario's throats.

Mr. Tory, do you want to do things differently? Stop listening to the band of bandits over there and start acting in the best interests of Ontarians, and get your caucus some real work to do. We're looking forward to it.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The member for Simcoe North will withdraw that comment.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You will just withdraw.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker, and make a point of order: I would ask that the member withdraw his final statement—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members' statements.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Today is police association day here at Queen's Park. I also stand to bring to the attention of this House and speak about progress that is being made by police responding to incidents which involve persons who are mentally ill. This is a matter that has been raised by constituents in Durham riding who want to ensure family members who need treatment and support for mental illness do not find themselves in court and indeed in prison. There is more to be done.

Furthermore, I would like to commend police and mental health providers on the partnership approach being taken in Durham region when responding to individuals in crisis. This partnership includes Durham Mental Health Services, whose executive director is Robert Adams. These interventions require very specialized training and resources. Crisis services offered in conjunction with Durham Regional Police Service include safe beds, a crisis line and follow-up.

I'd like to point out that recently in Durham region there was a Canadian critical incident conference held November 7 to 9 in Oshawa. Its purpose was to further educate front-line police officers who, in responding to victims, are involved with disturbed and troubled individuals. Inspector Tom Cameron of Durham Regional Police was one of the partners at the conference. Inspector Bruce Townley serves as supervisor of the mental health support unit with Durham Regional Police.

It is estimated that mental illness affects four out of five Ontario citizens, either directly or indirectly through family members, co-workers, friends and associates. I'm pleased the police are working with our community



health professionals in responding to those who are mentally ill, and I trust this trend will continue.

### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** I rise today in support of Ontario farmers. As a farmer myself and a rural MPP, I know first-hand the financial crisis our farmers are facing.

On October 27, our rural caucus met with a large group of agricultural partners to talk about their Farmers Feed Cities campaign, a campaign that focuses on risk management programs, stabilization of the industry and the revitalization of rural Ontario. We shared ideas about why the financial crisis is happening and what can be done to improve the situation both immediately and over the long term.

Agriculture in Ontario provides more than 650,000 jobs and is a multi-billion dollar business. We are encouraged by the support we've received from our farming community. We value our relationship with farmers—folks who give so much to make life better for Ontarians. Caucus is encouraged by their willingness to share together with our government and work hard to find solutions, and by their openness to share with us.

As an MPP from rural Ontario, I will continue to work with our agricultural partners to work toward solutions to this crisis so that our children and our grandchildren will have a future in farming in Ontario. I'm committed to working toward a prosperous and thriving rural Ontario.

Today I would like to thank the Ontario farming community and our agricultural partners for their continued efforts to provide a brighter future for Ontario. Rural caucus thanks our farmers and agricultural partners for continuing to bring farm issues to the forefront of discussion at Queen's Park—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

### VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I rise today to congratulate our Attorney General, Michael Bryant, and our Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Monte Kwinter, on convincing the federal government to respond to our call for a crack-down on violent gun crimes.

As we all know, our province, and the city of Toronto especially, has seen a sharp increase in gun-related murders this year. Just under a month ago I spoke about how our government is being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. For example, hospitals are now required by law to report individuals with gunshot wounds. Also, we've invested in safer communities by creating the community use of schools program.

The recent commitment made by our federal partners to be tough on crime is welcome news. The federal government will be increasing mandatory minimum sentences for trafficking in guns and will introduce two new gun-related offences. As well, we should all be pleased

that the federal government has committed to \$50 million in new funding to support community-based prevention and intervention programs that will be tough on the causes of crime.

Our ministers made a strong call for zero tolerance on gun crimes in Ontario and the federal government has heard us. This co-operation will lead to safe, liveable communities and fewer guns on our streets.

### POLICE

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I'm delighted to rise in the House today to recognize the members of the Police Association of Ontario, represented here today by their president, Bob Baltin. It also includes the Thunder Bay contingent of Jim Mauro, Keith Hobbes, Bill Shopoff and Greg Stephenson, who are visiting Queen's Park as part of their annual legislative day.

Reps of the PAO have come from across the province to meet with their MPPs to discuss mutual community safety concerns. Such exchanges are vitally important if we, as legislators, are to understand and appreciate the tremendous challenges Ontario's police officers face every day on the job.

This government realizes that our police deserve every possible support and reinforcement in their struggle to keep our province safe, and that is why we are moving fast to put 1,000 new officers on the road. We have heard the opposition criticize this plan countless times, but this government has taken great pains to ensure we are sending our resources where they are most needed: to address the province's most pressing safety concerns such as guns and gangs, organized crime, young offenders and domestic violence. When the ranks of police begin to increase with additional officers in the coming months, I'm certain this carefully executed allocation process will pay off.

I, for one, am particularly pleased that a significant number of the new personnel will be devoted to northern policing, that there will be a special funding allocation formula for the northern component and that we will take over funding those officers hired under the previous government program that was to sunset after five years.

On behalf of all my caucus colleagues and constituents, I would like to say to the police association members who are with us today, thank you for everything you do. You are the anchors of our community and Ontario simply could not prosper if it were not for your courage.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In our standing orders, which is how we behave in this place, I want to refer us to page 18, section VI, "Rules of Debate," section 23: "In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she ... (k) Uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder."

I've done that today. I withdraw the word "bandit" and I apologize to this House and especially to the member who was very offended by it, and substitute it with "bully."



**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. I think I need you to withdraw.

**Mr. Levac:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 38th Parliament, and to allow us a few seconds to get organized here.

From Brampton Centre, we have Kumail Abidi; from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Brenna Carroll; from Kitchener-Waterloo, Nadia Eckardt; from Northumberland, Laura Greenwood; from Leeds-Grenville, Zoë Griggs; from Davenport, Jessica James; from Scarborough-Agincourt, Margaret Jiang; from Brampton West-Mississauga, David Kong; from Eglinton-Lawrence, Adam Kwinter; from Niagara Centre, Alexandre Lafontaine; from York North, Helen Lenz; from Don Valley West, Cara Lew; from Cambridge, Andrew Martin; from Oakville, Jeremy McGibbon; from Waterloo-Wellington, Cameron McLean; from Simcoe-Grey, Alex Nyikos; from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Stephen Pynenburg; from Thornhill, Richard Sukhdeo; from Durham, Janine Sziklasi; from Stoney Creek, Nathan Terbrack; and from Burlington, Katherine Wilson.

Please join me in welcoming the pages.

1350

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act / *Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** The intention of this bill is quite simple: It's to strengthen your role, Mr. Speaker, as our new Speaker, and to compliment our leader, John Tory, for his leadership in improving members' behaviour in this Legislature.

### FAMILY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE DES QUESTIONS FAMILIALES

Mr. Bryant moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Arbitration Act, 1991, the Child and Family Services Act and the Family Law Act in connection with family arbitration and related matters, and to amend the Children's Law Reform Act in connection with the matters to be considered by the court in dealing with applications for custody and access / *Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur l'arbitrage, la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et la Loi sur le droit de la famille en ce qui concerne l'arbitrage familial et des questions connexes et modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance en ce qui concerne les questions que doit prendre en considération le tribunal qui traite des requêtes en vue d'obtenir la garde et le droit de visite.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister have a short statement?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I will defer my remarks to ministerial statements.

### MANDATORY BLOOD TESTING ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE OBLIGATOIRE PAR TEST SANGUIN

Mr. Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to require the taking and analysing of blood samples to protect victims of crime, emergency service workers, good Samaritans and other persons and to make consequential amendments to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 and the Health Protection and Promotion Act / *Projet de loi 28, Loi exigeant le prélèvement et l'analyse d'échantillons de sang afin de protéger les victimes d'actes criminels, le personnel des services d'urgence, les bons samaritains et d'autres personnes et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé et à la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister have a brief statement?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I will make a statement during ministers' statements.



GARETH RODGERS ACT  
FOR SPORT PARACHUTING  
(FREEFALLING REGULATION), 2005

LOI GARETH RODGERS DE 2005  
SUR LE PARACHUTISME SPORTIF  
(RÉGLEMENTATION DU SAUT  
SANS SOUTIEN)

Mr. Tascona moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 29, An Act in memory of Gareth Rodgers to regulate freefalling / Projet de loi 29, Loi à la mémoire de Gareth Rodgers pour réglementer le saut sans soutien.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member have a brief statement?

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** The bill enacts an act to regulate persons who participate in freefalling. The act establishes a system of offences for persons who fail to comply with the act and the terms of the permit or who manufacture parachutes that do not meet the requirements specified by the regulations.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE  
(LONDON) ACT, 2005

Ms. Matthews moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr17, An Act respecting Ronald McDonald House (London).

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

SAFE NEEDLES SAVE LIVES ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR L'UTILISATION  
D'AIGUILLES SÛRES  
POUR SAUVER DES VIES

Ms. Martel moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to reduce the incidence of needlestick injuries / Projet de loi 30, Loi visant à réduire les incidences de blessures causées par des piqûres d'aiguille.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Each year in Ontario, 33,000 health care workers suffer from a needlestick injury. A worker punctured by a needle or blade might then be exposed to 33 blood-borne diseases, including hepatitis C or HIV/AIDS. The overwhelming majority of these accidents are entirely preventable with the use of safety-engineered medical devices.

The bill would make it mandatory for employers in prescribed workplaces to provide workers with safety-engineered devices. The choice of devices would be made by the joint health and safety committee, and

appropriate training would be provided by the employer. The US, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have moved to protect workers and the general public from these injuries, and it's time for Ontario to do the same.

This bill is exactly the same as my Bill 179, which was passed unanimously by this House on second reading on March 31, 2005. I urge the government to adopt this private member's bill and prevent needle-stick injuries, which cause so much pain and suffering to tens of thousands of Ontarians every year.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** Happy 50th birthday.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** I was just wondering: After the member for London North Centre introduced the bill about Ronald McDonald House, I was very interested in finding out what it was about, but I don't remember if she was—

**The Speaker:** She introduced a private bill, Minister.

VISITORS

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome in the gallery here Pamela Cross of the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children, and Amanda Dale from the YWCA. Welcome back to this Legislature.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Government House leader.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** No.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** You don't say, "No," now. You don't know which one I'm going to choose.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** The one on the left.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 15, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 23. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1403 to 1408.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Baird, John R.	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bartolucci, Rick	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Klees, Frank	Ramsay, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	McMeekin, Ted	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Colle, Mike	McNeely, Phil	Sterling, Norman W.
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flaherty, Jim	Parsons, Ernie	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	Zimmer, David
Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve	
Gerretsen, John	Peterson, Tim	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Horwath, Andrea	Marchese, Rosario	Murdoch, Bill
Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley	Prue, Michael

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. Desrosiers):** The ayes are 73; the nays are 6.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### FAMILY LAW ARBITRATION

#### ARBITRAGE EN DROIT DE LA FAMILLE

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I rise in the House today to introduce legislation that would, if passed, make changes to the Arbitration Act, 1991.

A bit of background to let you know why we are here in this position now: The Arbitration Act was introduced on March 27, 1991, by the Attorney General of the day, Howard Hampton, presently the leader of the third party. Attorney General Hampton at that time articulated the purpose of the Arbitration Act, 1991. He said, "Arbitration is a good and accessible method of seeking resolution for many kinds of disputes. It can be more expedient and less costly than going to court. The parties can design their own procedures and select appropriate arbitrators."

During second reading debate in November, Charles Harnick, then Attorney General critic, a future Attorney General himself, also spoke in favour of the bill. In fact,

the NDP Arbitration Act won the support of all three parties and was passed unanimously on November 20, 1991.

The time is now to make needed improvements to the Arbitration Act. The bill I am introducing today would, if passed, amend the Arbitration Act, 1991, and improve it to ensure all family law arbitrations are conducted exclusively under Ontario and Canadian law. That means when it comes to family law arbitrations in this province, there is only one law in Ontario, and that is Canadian law.

Under the proposed legislation, no family law arbitration can be conducted under any other law or principle. Resolutions based on any other laws or principles would have no legal effect and would not constitute family arbitration. They would amount to advice only. Ontarians of course, as the Premier said, would continue to have the right to seek advice from any source, including religious advice in matters of the family. However, under the proposed legislation, such advice would not be enforceable by the courts.

But there is more to be done. We also want to change the way Ontario family arbitrations have been conducted to date. We are proposing a number of legislative and regulatory changes, all designed to reform Ontario family law arbitrations and better protect the people who choose to arbitrate their family disputes.

This legislation, if passed, would require that a family arbitration agreement based on Ontario and Canadian law must be in writing, and that each party must receive independent legal advice before making an arbitration agreement.

Under the current system, participants of a family arbitration can waive their right to appeal an arbitrator's decision in court. Under our new bill, under our new proposal, the right to appeal could not be waived, so that anyone who is not satisfied with the result could take it before an Ontario court for review.

Also under the current system, the 1991 system, people can agree in advance of an actual dispute arising—for example, as part of a marriage contract—to use arbitration to resolve all family matters. This locks them into a position of little or no choice if and when family disputes arise. Under our new proposal, we would prohibit advance agreements to arbitrate family law matters, ensuring that everyone has the right to resolve their disputes when their dispute arises, using their method of choice.

Very importantly, with this proposed legislation, all family arbitration decisions must be made in the best interests of the children involved.

It also authorizes the regulation of Ontario family law arbitrators for the first time. If this legislation is passed, we will have the authority to, and will, require Ontario family law arbitrators to be members of a recognized professional dispute resolution organization, and to undergo training, including training in screening parties separately for power imbalances and domestic violence. We will require, in addition to the training, that they inquire into such matters of power imbalances and domestic violence. Lastly, we're requiring that family law arbitrators keep



proper records and submit reports, to be tracked by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Our government has been examining the issue of family law arbitrations for some time now. We have been considering the views of Ontarians, consulting with the public and consulting with experts. Part of that consultation was conducted by Marion Boyd, a former Attorney General and minister responsible for women's issues who, in her pre-elected life, served as executive director of the London Battered Women's Advocacy Centre. Ms. Boyd conducted public hearings that heard from close to 50 groups and dozens of individuals and received an additional 40 written submissions. I want to thank her for her typically thoughtful and exhaustive consideration of this issue. I want to thank Ms. Boyd for acting in the name of public service to try and assist the government in improving family law arbitration in Ontario.

We heard loud and clear from those seeking greater protections, especially protections for women. So, in addition to these legislative amendments designed to better protect the vulnerable, my colleague the minister responsible for women's issues, the Honourable Sandra Pupatello, is developing new community outreach and education programs so that all Ontarians will better understand their rights under Canadian and Ontario family law and family law arbitrations.

Notre gouvernement ne cherche pas seulement à mieux protéger les droits des personnes vulnérables. Il veut aussi s'assurer que ces personnes comprennent bien leurs choix et leurs droits.

Our government not only wants to better protect the rights of the vulnerable; we also want to ensure that they understand their rights and their choices. These education and community outreach programs will ensure that vulnerable people in communities across this province understand that only decisions that are conducted exclusively in accordance with Canadian law are family arbitrations, and only such decisions are enforceable.

Also, as part of our government's commitment to the domestic violence action plan, we are proposing a change to the Children's Law Reform Act which, if passed, would ensure that violence and abuse are considered when determining the best interests of a child in the context of custody and access. This amendment, we were told—and we acted upon that—will make a real difference to the safety of the women and children of Ontario.

1420

It is trite to say that we live in a province of tremendous diversity. Ontarians understand that diversity enriches us beyond description. At the same time, we are all standing on and building on common ground. I think it's fair to say that sometimes Canadians are shy, if not at least careful, about defining our common ground and entrenching it so. We are not a nation of the melting pot. Canada is a mosaic that is constantly changing, and so our laws change too. It's not surprising that this debate over our common ground of our family law system was not a simple one. It is my hope and our hope that we are the stronger for the debate and the changes to come.

For family law matters, we are all equal before the law—one law for all Ontarians. Not only do we need to ensure that all Ontarians are protected when it comes to matters of family law, be it Ontario family arbitrations or custody and access agreements; we also need to ensure that family law matters in this province are governed exclusively by Ontario and Canadian law.

## MANDATORY BLOOD TESTING

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** The McGuinty government is committed to safeguarding community safety personnel to ensure that they are protected while they protect the citizens of Ontario. Every effort must be made to support those who protect us as they go about their challenging tasks in communities all across Ontario. Every day across Ontario, thousands of men and women in a variety of occupations—police, paramedics, firefighters, for example—work to keep our communities safe. In the process, they face the risk of infection with specific diseases—HIV/AIDS, or hepatitis B or C—through contact with members of the public.

It is my privilege to introduce today a bill that, if passed, would help make Ontarians safer and provide greater peace of mind for those who may be exposed to the risk of infection through their work in protecting their fellow Ontarians. The proposed Mandatory Blood Testing Act, 2005, would, if passed, replace section 22.1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act with new community safety legislation for mandatory blood sampling.

The government views this proposed legislation as an important community safety issue. The mental stress and lifestyle changes experienced by a person who may have been exposed to infection while protecting us, or as a victim of crime, should not be underestimated. That person is often placed in a cruel limbo caused by the uncertainty of not knowing whether they have, or may, become infected.

You may recall that the current provisions for mandatory blood sampling date from 2003, when a private member's bill, Bill 105, amended the Health Protection and Promotion Act to help victims of crime and first aid responders who may have been exposed to HIV/AIDS, or hepatitis B or C. Essentially, the legislative provisions prescribe that if a person who is the source of a possible infection does not voluntarily provide a blood sample, a medical officer of health can order the required sampling and testing.

After two years of experience with that legislation, we have heard from stakeholders about the challenges faced by those involved in the process. We've heard the concerns of the medical community, the policing community and the public safety community about the need to move responsibility for obtaining an order to have a blood sample test done from the health system to an independent board.

We have responded. Decisions on whether to grant an application for mandatory blood sampling would be

entrusted to the Consent and Capacity Board. Medical officers of health would continue to be responsible for screening applications, seeking voluntary samples and supervising the process after an order is issued, but they would be removed from the responsibility to act as adjudicators for the applications.

We've heard the concerns of the policing community that the process be simplified, that timelines be shortened and that police be specifically designated in the eligibility criteria. The legislation I'm proposing would, through regulation, give authority to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to specify eligible occupations.

We've also heard from community safety workers that they want, among other things, faster resolution of applications. If passed, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act would streamline the process and achieve faster decisions. The period for voluntary compliance would be reduced from seven days to two days.

The current process has taken up to 70 days to complete. Should the proposed legislation be passed, this process would be reduced to 19 days. This means significant reductions in the time for processing these applications and significant reduction in the time our public safety workers will be in this limbo. By streamlining the process for applications, as proposed in the bill, we would ensure applications are dealt with in an efficient, effective and timely manner for all concerned.

The changes we are proposing represent a delicate balance of the interests of the applicant, the respondent, community safety workers, health care workers and others. The proposed Mandatory Blood Testing Act captures the intent and the spirit of the original legislation and seeks to respond to the concerns raised by our partners in community safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the leadership of the Police Association of Ontario for their valuable input in the crafting of this bill. As we observe PAO lobby day today, I'm pleased to recognize these efforts and also to recognize, in the east gallery, Bob Baltin and Bruce Miller of the Police Association of Ontario, Karl Walsh, the recently elected president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, and Dave Wilson, the president of the Toronto Police Association.

This bill that I'm introducing today is a fine outcome of the productive working relationship between the McGuinty government and the Police Association of Ontario. This bill reflects our government's plan to strengthen our province by strengthening our most competitive advantage—our people. If passed, the Mandatory Blood Testing Act, 2005, would resolve many of the issues that concern our community safety workers and give them the peace of mind to go about their work with greater confidence. It means greater safety and security for all Ontarians.

## FAMILY LAW ARBITRATION

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I'm responding to the Attorney General's statement. It's curious that the Attorney General is making this announcement today in the absence of the Premier, given the Premier's earlier decision to exclude the Attorney General from the public announcement.

At the outset, I want to indicate that we support the general—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock.

The member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Runciman:** At the outset, I want to indicate that we support the general intent of this initiative. The government, for unknown reasons, doesn't wish to share draft legislation with the opposition, so we will have to reserve final judgment. With this Liberal crew, we can't assume anything is going to be done properly.

This issue, the question of allowing Sharia law to be utilized in domestic disputes through private arbitration, is a casebook example of the incompetence of this McGuinty Liberal government. Sadly, the Attorney General allowed this issue to fester for month after month, turning it into a them-against-us controversy. He botched this, and he botched it badly.

But the Attorney General is not the only one at fault. Premier McGuinty has to share responsibility for this fiasco. He is the leader of the government. The question should have been resolved in a timely manner, not letting people twist in the wind and deepen societal divisions. It should have involved extensive consultation. Instead, we get a back door, clandestine Sunday afternoon announcement by the Premier, with the Attorney General, in a very rare occurrence indeed, hidden from public view. I would suggest a huge vote of non-confidence in the Attorney General's carriage of this issue—no consultation with any community, Christian, Jewish or Muslim, a covert and shameful way to act for any government that purports to be responsible. Our party, the official opposition, will be calling for public hearings on this legislation. Ontarians shut out from this process have a right to be heard.

1430

## MANDATORY BLOOD TESTING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to make a few comments on the bill introduced by Minister Kwinter. I want to thank him for bringing the bill forward, and also to congratulate him on having his grandson here in the House as a page.

I am pleased it has been brought forward today, on the PAO lobby day here at Queen's Park. I want to thank all the different police associations from across the province that have come forward today. I want to thank Bob Baltin for his kind comments to myself and Mr. Tory yesterday at their conference at the Marriott Hotel.



This follows up on Bill 105, a bill that was passed in this House, I think by 78 to 2. The problem with the bill is that it ran into the roadblock of regulations, and we've pointed that out on a number of occasions. I brought it up just a couple of weeks ago with the private security guards and investigators act, and the fact that we are running into a lot of regulations and that could delay the bill.

I say to the minister that I'm hoping that moving it to the Consent and Capacity Board will be a speedy process. The people who come forward, whether they are emergency service workers, victims of crime, ordinary citizens or good Samaritans, need to know this is a very speedy process, because they are being infected, in some cases, with blood from other people that contains very infectious and deadly diseases. So it's important this process move quickly.

I would suggest that if there's anything we can do with this bill as legislators, it's possibly to move to committee immediately after first reading today and get on with the hearings. We've been through this process before and we need to know, whether we travel the province or whatever, that we are going to be able to satisfy the wishes of all the stakeholders. In the end, we have to be assured that the process is speedy, because life and death depends upon it, and that's why we're here on PAO lobby day today.

I'll be asking our party to support this bill, but after first reading debate.

#### FAMILY LAW ARBITRATION

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park, I want to respond to the statement made today by the Attorney General that accompanied his tabling and first reading of the legislation that was a long time coming. I say, after but a cursory examination of it, that it is our fear the Attorney General and this government have made a bad situation worse.

New Democrats have been very clear that when it comes to the resolution of family disputes, it must be the public law that prevails, and if it's going to be a ruling that people are going to be calling upon the courts to enforce, it must be the public courts that apply that public law. Anything less is a disservice to those families and, most importantly, those kids who rely upon our justice system to provide justice for them when there are rancorous and oftentimes very dangerous family disputes.

It is no solution to suggest that somehow, among others, faith-based arbitrations can continue to resolve family disputes with binding arbitration if they but utilize the Ontario or Canadian law, when in the course of utilizing that Ontario or Canadian law, those inherent biases—I use that word in the most neutral way—prevail within the context of determinations in the course of an adjudication.

The Arbitration Act, 1991, supported by all three parties in this Legislature, was not the first Arbitration Act this province had. Arbitration, as we all know, is hun-

dreds of years old. The Arbitration Act, 1991, very specifically contemplates among its earliest sections the prospect there may be certain areas of law that should not be subject to arbitration. It is the New Democratic Party's position that the government should invoke those provisions of the existing Arbitration Act to exclude/exempt, family matters from arbitration.

But let's understand: The real issue here, and the real shame this government has to bear, is Dalton McGuinty's and the Attorney General's abdication of responsibility to maintain a fully staffed and fully resourced justice system for women and children seeking enforceable orders in the course of family breakdowns and women who find themselves prey of some very dangerous men.

The real issue here is the failure of the federal government to appoint a sufficient number of Unified Family Court judges, so that those Unified Family Courts can extend across the province, providing the access and the resource that they do for speedier adjudication of family disputes; the failure of this government to ensure an adequate level of numbers of provincial judges doing family work, its failure to provide an adequate number of courtrooms.

Go into a Family Court some day, Attorney General, and you'll see a sausage factory process. You'll see people having their cases being adjourned week after week, month after month, to the tune of years. You'll see litigants in the family law process being forced into agreements which are not in their best interests, which are not in their children's best interests.

Your persistent failure to adequately resource Legal Aid Ontario to ensure that litigants in the Family Court process—inevitably women and their children who need and deserve legal representation so that their rights under the existing law in this province can be enforced—is the shame that you have to bear.

This legislation is not a resolution to the crisis that you've created with respect to the inadequate level of support in terms of legal representation for women and their kids engaged and involved in serious disputes after the breakdown of a family relationship.

Attorney General, you have missed the mark. This is a chimerical response to a very, very serious problem. I say that this legislation should undergo some very, very strong scrutiny by this chamber and by its members.

New Democrats declare once again: Sir, you have taken a bad situation and in all likelihood made it far worse.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I can wait.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

## POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, as you and the Attorney General pointed out, the Police Association of Ontario is here with us today, representing the men and women who serve on our police forces across Ontario. They released a poll today indicating that over 80% of Ontarians believe that funding for police is a top priority. Indeed your government—you, the Premier and assorted others—made a promise over two years ago to fund 1,000 new police officers, and we'll only be moving forward in part on that commitment on November 30.

Minister, we've learned that the Toronto Police Service has requested 250 police officers to meet the community safety challenges, including record high levels of gunplay on city streets this summer. Can you confirm that Toronto will indeed receive the 250 officers they need to battle crime that they've applied for under the criteria set out in your program? Can you confirm that?

1440

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I'm pleased to respond. I'm sure the leader of the official opposition will know that when I made the announcement, I said that we would provide funding for 1,000 new police officers. We will provide full funding, at \$70,000 per officer, for 60 officers in the north. We will fund retroactively 400 officers dating back to October 23, 2003, and funding commencing for May 18, 2005. The rest of the officers will be distributed among other police services. We've sent out a package, the police services across Ontario have responded, and at the end of this month, as I've always said, we will say where that funding is going to go. It would be premature for me to tell you today, because we are going to be making that announcement at the end of the month. I can assure you that there will be a fair allocation of those resources.

**Mr. Tory:** Again to the minister: From this morning's Ottawa Citizen, we see a picture emerging of just how ineffective this initiative is going to be. The Ottawa Police Service submitted a 60-page application under your 1,000 cops program and, according to the budget chief of the police force, they took great care to meet all of the criteria under the program. The problem is that officials in your government today indicated that Ottawa will receive less than half of the officers they requested to ensure community safety. In fact, Ottawa has already hired 92 officers and needs to hire another 90 simply to keep up with population growth. They've made a request for 182 officers under your program to service the second-largest city in Ontario.

Based on the comments of your officials, how many officers under your program will be left out, will you say no to, for the city of Ottawa?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I find it interesting that you should raise that. I'm not embarrassed to say this. If you talk to Chief Bevan, he will tell you, as he told me, that he is just livid that under your government he did not get the number of officers that he thought he should get. He has asked if I would redress that inadequacy on the part of your government. I can tell you this: that when we allocate those officers, we will have a formula that will be transparent, and I can assure you that Ottawa will get its fair share.

**Mr. Tory:** Again to the minister: Areas all around Toronto are experiencing, of course, explosive population growth and, unfortunately, growth in crime and violent crimes as well. Durham region is facing significant growth and the police force is being stretched to the limit over a very large geographical area. Under your program, Durham has made a submission for a total of 77 new police officers. Will you guarantee today that Durham, with its population growth and the problems it faces in terms of crime, will receive the officers they say they need to deal with that population growth and with the growth in crime, the 77 officers? Will they receive that under your program?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I couldn't be more clear, in that we have received applications from police services right across the province. You have to understand that those applications come with the support of their municipality, their police service boards and their chiefs, and they have to fund their particular portion of it.

What is going to happen is, we have to evaluate if they meet our criteria, where we said 500 officers have to go to community policing and 500 officers have to go to six areas that we have designated. We have to go through that whole process and find out whether or not they meet the criteria, and then we have to allocate them fairly. That means we have to allocate them across the whole province on a formula that basically is based on population and other considerations, and we will do that. When we make that announcement, I will have no trouble standing up to defend how those allocations were made.

## MUNICIPAL TAXATION

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, your colleague the Minister of Finance stated that there would be no tax increases on the provincial watch, but as you know as well, only the province can give municipalities the ability to tax. That, of course, is precisely what is called for in the report that came out yesterday called Building a 21st Century City.

Minister, I want to remind you of all of the publicity and fanfare associated with your Premier signing the Taxpayer Protection Act on September 11, 2003. He had a big press conference, and he signed the document that day indicating he would abide by that act.

Section 3 of that act states that if the province gives a municipality the ability to raise taxes, it has to be subject to a referendum. My question is simply this: Is it your



government's plan to follow the Premier's commitment to abide by the Taxpayer Protection Act, and therefore should we expect there will be a referendum in respect of these powers being given to the city to create and raise new taxes?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. First of all, I think we all realize in this House that for Ontario to be strong, it is absolutely essential that Toronto be strong, and that's what the report is all about. It's all about strengthening the local government in Toronto so that it can achieve the kind of dynamic growth that it's looking for in the 21st century.

We accepted the report yesterday. Staff of both the ministry and city hall have worked on it very diligently over the last year. There are some excellent suggestions in that report. We'll be looking at that, and in due time—hopefully, before Christmas—we will be introducing a new City of Toronto Act.

**Mr. Tory:** That was a very interesting little talk, but there was a pretty simple question that was asked.

It was your Premier who made the commitment to the people of Ontario that he would not raise taxes, and then brought in the biggest tax increase in the history of Ontario. It was also—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tory:** That is just a fact. As much as you don't like it, it's just a fact.

It was also your Premier, Dalton McGuinty, who signed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. Stop the clock. I need to be able to hear the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** It was your Premier who said he wouldn't raise taxes and brought in the biggest tax increase in history. It was also your Premier who signed the Taxpayer Protection Act, and it says—and it said it when he signed it; there was no asterisk beside his signature—that you have to hold a referendum before allowing somebody to increase taxes. So I'm asking just for a simple yes or no answer. He signed it; it says what it says. Will he and you, the government, be abiding by what it says—yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** First of all, this government is extremely proud of what we've done for the city of Toronto already. Let's take a look at the provincial assistance that we've given Toronto: in the year 2003, \$137 million, which grew to \$183 million in 2004; in 2005, it's up to \$217 million, and by next year it will be \$312 million.

I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition would like to see a strong Toronto, a strong Ontario and a strong Canada. That's what this report is all about. We're going to look at the report, look at all the ideas, and come up with the best possible act as far as the City of Toronto Act is concerned, for the people of Ontario and for the people of Toronto. That's most important.

**Mr. Tory:** Still no answer. Taxpayers in Toronto would at least want from the minister the assurance that the city government will be held to account for how they run their affairs, especially if they are being given any additional ability to levy new taxes. Minister, since you're not willing to state definitively whether you will abide by the Taxpayer Protection Act that your Premier signed, can you assure us at the very least that the new City of Toronto Act, when it's introduced, will accompany any new powers to tax with reforms designed specifically to guarantee greater accountability to the taxpayers of Toronto and Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** We believe that the city of Toronto is a mature level of government and it deserves to be treated with respect, as do all the other municipalities in Ontario. But let me just give you a quote from an individual with which I totally agree. This individual said that we have "to give city governments more latitude to raise some of their own revenue if they choose to do so ... they will then be accountable for whatever they choose to do—to fund some things that may be priorities for these cities. Right now they have to go and ask for permission to do everything and I don't think that's right."

I agree with that statement, and that statement was made by John Tory.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Order.

New question.

1450

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a question for the Acting Premier. Who promised, "In our first year in government, we will repeal the misnamed Tenant Protection Act and replace it with an effective tenant protection law"? Was it (a) the Conservatives, (b) the Rhinoceros Party, or (c) the McGuinty Liberals?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Let me just say that this government has done more for the vulnerable people, when it comes to their housing situation, than has been done over the last 15 years. And let's just recount some of the things we've done. We've invested \$301 million to match the federal government's \$301 million for an affordable housing program that will create over 5,300 new units of affordable housing. We will also be providing housing allowances for over 5,000 lower-income households, and right now we're in the process of hearing that from our service managers throughout the province. We've established a rent bank to help people in emergency situations. We've established a Toronto pilot project in which some 400 units were made available at extremely low rents. We have the lowest rent guidelines—in 2005 at 1.5% and this year at 2.1%—that we've seen in this

province. We've done a lot and we will be doing a lot in the future as well.

**Mr. Hampton:** The correct answer to the question is the McGuinty Liberals. This was the Liberal platform and this is what it said: Before the election, Dalton McGuinty called the Tenant Protection Act a "tenant rejection act." He said that it "destroyed rent controls." He promised to repeal it within 365 days of taking office and vowed to replace it with real rent controls.

Acting Premier, today is day 774. Where's the tenant protection and where are the real rent controls that Dalton McGuinty promised?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I'm sure the member will agree that this is a very complex and complicated issue. There have been a lot of different acts dealing with tenant protection over the last number of years that have been changed repeatedly. We felt that the right way to go about it was to have a consultation process that was led by my parliamentary assistant, Brad Duguid, in a very, very competent fashion.

We will be dealing with this issue, and I can tell you that we are also very proud of the \$24 million that has been made available for the strong start program, to make sure we can get affordable housing up and off the ground as soon as possible.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to remind people that this is the minister who talked about real and meaningless consultation.

Jennifer Ramsay, who is with the Advocacy Centre for Tenants, says, "I hate to think of myself as naive, but I really believed the Liberals were going to act on this issue." Unfortunately, tenant protection is just another example of how the McGuinty government can't be trusted. The Premier promised "real rent control within 365 days." But here we are on day 774, with no results for tenants: Single parents, seniors, students and new Canadians are still waiting for Dalton McGuinty to keep his promise.

I ask again, when is Dalton McGuinty going to keep his promise of real rent controls, real tenant protection for hard-pressed tenants in Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** As the member well knows, when I made that very unfortunate statement—it was on the first day that the House sat, about two years ago—I was referring to an old Tory talking point. He well knows that. Let me just say that we are going to bring in real tenant protection, but the best protection we can give to the vulnerable in our community is to make sure that affordable housing is available, to make sure that housing allowances are available and to make sure that the rent guidelines are at the historically low levels they have been for the last two years.

We are proud of the work we've done, and we're going to bring in the kind of legislation that I think we will all be proud of in the near future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question.

**Mr. Hampton:** To the Acting Premier again: I think tenants would probably be getting more from the Rhin-

oceros Party on this issue than they've obviously gotten from this government.

Tenant advocates came to Queen's Park today. They say the McGuinty government's broken rent control promise has meant more unfair rent increases, especially for lower- and modest-income tenants. That's because they can see that decontrol remains the law of the land; it gives landlords a free hand to raise rents when a rental unit is vacated. Dalton McGuinty promised real rent control and real tenant protection in 365 days. On day 774, will the McGuinty government finally keep its promise and introduce real rent controls that guarantee affordable rental housing for tenants? Will you do it now?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me just say this: This is very much like the first question, and I've already stated this government is very proud of the record it has with respect to what we've done in the housing area for the vulnerable and low-income people in this province. It's a very complex issue. We will be dealing with it in due course, and we will be bringing in the kind of tenant protection laws that all of us can be proud of.

**Mr. Hampton:** The minister says that this has become a real complex issue. Well, Dalton McGuinty said, "We will provide real protection for tenants," and, "We will introduce real protection for tenants from excessive rent increases." He said all those things.

Let me tell you another problem here: arbitrary evictions. The Tenant Protection Act has set up a sort of kangaroo court system that lets unscrupulous landlords drive tenants out of their homes on to the streets without a hearing. The former Ombudsman called it "a mechanical exercise devoid of human consideration." He said that tenants deserve better. You said tenants deserve better 774 days ago. When will the McGuinty government bring in real rent control and end the unfair, arbitrary evictions that are driving tenants out of their homes and on to the streets?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Just let me repeat again: We will be bringing in an act, and it will give real protection to tenants. But let me give some quotes of what people said about some of the earlier initiatives we had when we had the low rent guidelines. Michael Prue, what did he say? He said on April 20 in Hansard, "I stand up to actually applaud this government for reducing rents by 2% in the coming year. I believe that this is a good thing." We agree with Michael Prue. What did Gail Nyberg say, the former program coordinator of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations? "We're very pleased. Tenants need help now and this is a big step. It's a positive sign that this government is listening to both sides." We listen, we consult with the people as we have, and we will bring in a piece of legislation that we can all be proud of and that will protect tenants in this province.

1500

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, the reason tenant advocates came here today is because they've been talking to your



government for 774 days, and as usual, they heard the promises of the McGuinty government, but there is no delivery, no keeping of the promises. They point out that tenants want to live in safe, secure, well-maintained apartments. Unfortunately, the Tenant Protection Act leaves many tenants living in squalor, in rundown buildings, while disinclined landlords refuse to maintain the properties, and when the landlord finally does do some maintenance work, they get a free hand to raise rents through the roof.

Acting Premier, Minister, it's time to give the Tenant Protection Act the Mike Holmes treatment. Tear down the old act and build the new one that you promised. It's day 774. When are you going to keep the promise you made—real rent control, real tenant protection?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** First of all, let me also welcome the tenant advocates who are here today in the House. They have a very important job to do, and certainly to make government aware of the demands of the people that they represent is extremely important.

But let's just talk about some of the other initiatives. This was what David Miller said on August 31 this year: The announcement—and this is with respect to affordable housing program—provides Toronto with much-needed federal and provincial funding for affordable housing, and he's delighted that \$116 million will be invested in affordable homes in this city.

That's what's important, to make sure that the vulnerable in our society have the housing that they deserve. That's exactly what we're doing, and we will be dealing with the Tenant Protection Act as well.

#### POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, according to the PAO today, it's quite obvious that we're in desperate need of police resources. You're now 26 months into your mandate, and there are a lot of communities desperately looking for assistance under the 1,000 cop program.

The city of Barrie, as you know, is one of the fastest-growing communities per capita in our province. Chief Wayne Frechette and the Barrie Police Services Board are responsible for the safety of the citizens of this very rapidly growing city. The city has applied for 34 net new officers under your Safer Communities-1,000 Officers Partnership program.

Minister, can you assure us, to the best of your ability, that the city of Barrie will receive the approval and funding they need for those 34 officers that they have very, very faithfully applied for?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I think the member should understand that when we put out the call for these officers, we got considerably more responses than the 1,000 officers we have committed to. What we have to do is evaluate them, (a) to find out if they meet our criteria, and (b) to find out if in fact we have them available.

You should know that what we have done is very significant. Your government's community policing programming was supposed to lapse in five years. We have not only extended that, we've extended it in perpetuity. By the time we are finished with this program, we will have provided \$67.1 million a year in perpetuity.

Now, whether Barrie, Ottawa or any other community is going to get what they ask for, I think it would be unrealistic because there aren't enough police officers to go around. But we will apportion them fairly and transparently and make sure that every police service is dealt with in a fair and upright manner.

**Mr. Dunlop:** They wouldn't have applied for them if they didn't need them. That's the problem.

We've learned that the region of York, under the leadership of Chief Armand La Barge, who is also the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and the police services board in York region have applied for the most in the province. They've applied for 148 community policing officers and 143 of the specific program officers under your 1,000 cop announcement.

Minister, of the 291 net new officers—and that's, of course, more than even the city of Toronto applied for—160 of those would fall into the retroactive hiring practice. The question really is more on funding now. When can York region expect to see their application for the 291 new officers approved, but, more importantly, when will they actually receive funding or get their cheque for the 160 officers that they have retroactively hired since October 2003?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I'm sure the member knows how the process works. What has happened is that various police services—and I have to stress that funding of police officers is a metro or a municipal responsibility. What we are doing is helping them out with this program, as you did when you were in government with your community policing program. So it isn't our responsibility to fund all the policing in Ontario. What we have done is that we want to help those municipalities that don't have the fiscal capability of doing it. So we are doing that, and we are going to be providing that funding.

Also, I'm sure you know, because it's exactly the same process you used, all of this funding is done in arrears. We have to make sure that these people were actually hired and that they meet our criteria. They then bill us for their share, and we pay them in arrears. That's the way it was done before; that is the way it's going to be done now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday yet another Ontario citizen was shot on the street, the latest victim of a rising wave of gun violence. Ontario citizens are afraid. Eighty per cent of Ontarians feel that gun violence is a growing problem. But what do they see? They see a McGuinty government that is apparently more concerned with banning pit bulls than addressing the crisis of gun violence.

My question is this: Can you explain why the number of police officers on our streets, measured on a per capita basis, is declining under the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** The Attorney General.

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I'm happy, in a supplementary, to provide more information for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. But let's be clear: Notwithstanding anything that was just said, this government is investing more money in police services than that government ever invested in police services. This government is putting into place 1,000 new police officers. They made the promise to do it; we're doing it. Make no mistake about it: The investments that are going into public safety, policing and prosecutors, doing everything we can to prevent violence, are in fact at a level that puts public safety first. The suggestion that anybody in this House thinks that somehow dogs are more important than the 44 dead Torontonians, than the 70 people shot, is absolutely outrageous. And you should be—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** People have heard the McGuinty government announce, reannounce and reannounce again more police officers, but they don't see it happening.

I want to quote someone who said this two years ago: "The number of police officers per capita in Ontario has dropped more than 8% in the past 10 years. We need more police officers to keep our communities safe." Who said that? Dalton McGuinty.

What has happened after two years of the McGuinty government? Measured on a per capita basis, the number of police officers on the street is now down by 9%. You're not keeping pace, not even with the Conservatives.

Now municipalities are saying they are cash-strapped. You force them to pay two thirds of the cost of new police officers while you pay only one third of the cost. Will the Acting Premier guarantee cash-strapped municipalities today that if they cannot pick up the full two thirds of the cost that you demand, they will still get new police officers under the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

I just want to bring to the attention of the leader of the third party that between 1990 and 1995, based on police officers per 100,000, the NDP government decreased the number of police officers by 5.246%.

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I can tell you that in 1990 the NDP had 20,685 police in Ontario; in 2004, the year we were in government, 23,214. Those are the numbers, and I challenge you to challenge those numbers.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock.

New question.

1510

## SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. This year, our government announced that it would provide \$6.2 million to fund pre-apprenticeship training programs across the province. First of all, I'd like to say I'm proud of this commitment and this government's focus on learning.

Of this money, I know some has been used to fund pre-apprenticeship programs for at-risk youth. The record of the previous government speaks for itself. Year after year, they clawed back and cut programs that helped at-risk youth, leaving them with few avenues to pursue. Minister, can you please tell me about the portion of this funding that will specifically go to help at-risk youth, a demographic that was so neglected by the previous government?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for his question. I'd also like to thank you for your advocacy on behalf of your constituents and in particular on behalf of those who don't always have somebody to advocate for them.

You're right: We're working very hard to provide opportunities for all Ontarians, with particular regard to those who are at risk. Of the \$6.2 million committed for various pre-apprenticeship programs, we made an announcement about a month and a half ago, in the Scarborough area, specifically about some programs targeted at at-risk youth. We committed \$1 million for five separate pre-apprenticeship programs in areas such as construction, craft workers, cooks, general carpenters, and brick and stonemasons, to assist those who would otherwise not have the opportunity to obtain up to 40 weeks of in-classroom and job placement training, so that they'd learn basic skills—literacy, job—and be able to go on to the type of apprenticeship which provides a real opportunity for the future.

**Mr. Berardinetti:** Thank you for that answer, Minister, and happy 50th birthday, by the way.

We know that it's our government's goal to have 26,000 registered apprentices in Ontario by 2007-08. The five projects funded by our government will help to address pre-apprenticeship training. However, at-risk youth will continue to need assistance, especially if they cannot afford to continue with their training.

Minister, what further programming does our government have in place to assist at-risk youth in becoming independent and accessing work and learning in order to help them become well-contributing members of society?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** Again I'd like to thank the member for identifying a very important issue. If it's a question of financial accessibility, the Reaching Higher plan has been constructed in a way—\$1.5 billion extra money for financial assistance. We're determined to ensure that



nobody misses out on an opportunity because of financial reasons.

With respect to youth who may not want or are not able to continue with a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program, we have programs such as Job Connect, which provided up to 97,000 young people last year with information and assistance in terms of literacy, job skills and related training.

This past summer, we ran the summer jobs program. It's a \$50-million program every year which provides a \$2-per-hour incentive to employers. We hired 57,000 young people through that program—4,400 hired through the various government ministries and agencies. We're working with our colleague the Minister of Education on the Learning to 18 project, and his very important initiative that allows schools to be used for after-hour activities, which the previous Tory government cut.

### POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety. We've been advised that the London Police Service has put in a request for 77 police officers under your program to help deal with a growing violent crime rate, including a record 13 murders this year in London. Despite it being two years late, you've announced allocations that would be made public on November 30. Can you guarantee today that London will receive funding for the 77 officers they've requested in terms of ensuring community safety in the city of London?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** Let me just repeat what we're doing. We've sent out these forms; we've sent out the information. Police services across Ontario have responded. They have said that they are prepared, on their part, to fund their share of a number of police officers, to the tune of whatever it is—77, 80, 100, 200; whatever it is. That number, of all of the people who are saying they're prepared to do it, is a number that exceeds 1,000. We have to take a look at those numbers to find out if they meet our criteria. Half of them go to community policing and the other half go to the six areas that we've identified. Once we have done that and we make sure that they're prepared to do that, we will then, on a formula basis that is fair, transparent, and equitable, assign those officers.

I can't guarantee anything to you today because you're throwing out numbers that may or may not have any relevance. But I can tell you this: When the time comes, we will make that allocation, and I am prepared to stand up and defend what that allocation is.

**Mr. Runciman:** It's certainly relevant to the city of London: 13 murders—I think, on a per capita basis, the highest murder rate of any municipality in Ontario. Their request was put forward based on what they believe they need to ensure community safety, especially in the face of a rash of violent crimes which are fuelled by guns, gangs and the illegal drug trade, yet you're making them

wait another week, on top of the two years that they've already waited.

The Essex police force has sought funding for four new officers under the program. The Perth and Chatham-Kent forces are also seeking new officers. Minister, will you guarantee today that on November 30, police forces in Essex, Chatham-Kent and Perth will receive the 11 officers they need to ensure community safety? Will you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** One thing I can guarantee is that every single police service that applied for officers will get police officers. I can't guarantee what the number is going to be, because there are several permutations. Number one, we are providing 60 police officers for the north, and we're funding those \$70,000 per officer. So we have to find out what officers want to go there.

I have to say, the member from Simcoe North issued a press release in July or August, calling for us to retroactively fund officers that were hired after October 23 and have already been put on the street, and we agreed. So we have provided 400 officers retroactively. They will start being paid as of May 18. But that will fit into the equation.

When you ask these particular questions about, "Will they get this or will they get that," it all depends on how many of them are retroactive, how many of them are current. We will go through that. We will assign them on a fair and equitable basis. Again, I think that those municipalities should be satisfied—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

### PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to the Minister of Labour. On July 7, 2005, a Ministry of Labour inspector issued two orders requiring an employer in a long-term-care home to use safety-engineered medical devices and to provide training for these. The employer filed an appeal with the Ontario Labour Relations Board requesting suspension and removal of the orders. On August 11, the OLRB dismissed the employer appeal. But on September 2, in a follow-up inspection of the home, the same ministry inspector rescinded the very orders that he had issued in July.

Minister, how is it that an inspector could rescind orders that had been upheld by the OLRB and leave workers in this home with no protection from needle-stick injuries?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for the question. Certainly, ensuring health and safety in our workplaces is an extreme priority with our government. In 2004-05, we visited over 192 acute care facilities and issued over 2,000 orders. Sixty-eight of those orders were for needle-stick injuries.

I do not have the specifics of the case you brought forward today. I pledge to the member that I'll have an

answer for her on the specific case following question period today.

1520

**Ms. Martel:** I'd be happy to give the minister the specifics of the case, but let me point out that this wouldn't have happened at all if it were mandatory in Ontario for employers to use safety devices. This is the case in the United States, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and frankly, it should be the law in Ontario, too.

Every year, 33,000 health care workers suffer a needle-stick injury. They may be exposed to 33 blood-borne diseases, including hep C and HIV/AIDS, and all the pain and suffering that go with that. These injuries are entirely preventable with the use of safety-engineered devices. Minister, will your government adopt my private member's bill and stop the tens of thousands of needless needle-stick injuries in Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** Certainly, the ministry recognizes the importance of needle-stick prevention. That's why this past year the Ministry of Health invested over \$11 million in support of safety-engineered medical equipment. As well, the Ministry of Labour is working very closely with the Ministry of Health, as well as our health and safety partners, and looking toward where we go in the long term in developing additional measures and programs. My staff, as recently as September 22, 2005, met with the ONA, the SEIU and the Alliance for Sharps Safety and Needlestick Prevention to ensure that my staff are briefed. As well, last night I had a demonstration given to me of two safety devices that can play a very important role in ending needle-stick injuries. So it is an issue that we are looking at. We are working with the Ministry of Health and our health and safety partners.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, you've shown tremendous leadership in protecting women and children from domestic violence in our province. I'm pleased that this government's comprehensive domestic violence action plan has continued to help prevent abuse before it happens and get women and children the support they need when it does happen.

Domestic violence has a great impact on children of women who are exposed to domestic violence. Children who witness violence are at increased risk of experiencing social, emotional and behavioural problems, and we know that many of them are at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence themselves. With today's busy schedules, families see less of their children, and most often our educators are spending more time with our children. Minister, can you tell this House today the details about the announcement and what it means for our education professionals?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's**

**issues):** I was very happy to be joined by Madeleine Meilleur, our minister responsible for francophone affairs, when we announced panels for both the English and French school boards. What we've done is set up expert panels in education for training of educators—that is, principals and teachers, as well as counsellors. They really are on the front line and notice changes in children's behaviour. Should that change be coming from domestic violence, that is what we need to find out. The sooner we can elicit that from a child, the more likely we can intervene early and perhaps stop it.

Our first and foremost priority is breaking the cycle of domestic violence. We had a tremendous announcement yesterday at OISE at the University of Toronto. We hope that within these next six months, we'll have a training package that will be the best practices of Ontario. We will raise that level to a province-wide standard and hope to be able to implement that for the start of the next school year.

**M<sup>me</sup> Smith:** Madame la ministre, comme vous nous l'avez expliqué, la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur, s'est jointe à vous, la ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine, hier afin d'annoncer l'aide aux professionnels en enseignement qui recevront la formation appropriée afin d'appuyer et de venir en aide aux étudiants qui seraient exposés à la violence domestique.

Il y a plusieurs femmes et enfants francophones en Ontario qui vont bénéficier de cette annonce. Madame la ministre, pouvez-vous aujourd'hui nous expliquer comment cette annonce améliorera les services pour les femmes francophones victimes de violence domestique?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** The minister responsible for francophone affairs.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones):** La violence domestique se fait ressentir parmi certains groupes à haut risque, soit par pénurie d'appui, soit en vivant dans des communautés où l'incidence de violence domestique est plus élevée. Voilà pourquoi le plan d'action rend prioritaire l'amélioration de l'accès aux services en français pour les femmes et les enfants qui sont à risque. Les personnes vulnérables de la communauté francophone doivent savoir que l'aide et l'appui existent et leur sont accessibles. Nous nous efforçons de nous assurer que les femmes et les enfants vulnérables recevront l'aide dont ils ont besoin dans leur propre langue et dans l'environnement socioculturel où ils sont le plus confortables.

## POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. As you may recall, my father served for years in the policing community, completing his career as the chief of police in Thunder Bay, and also as the OACP chair. Not only that, but my grandfather was also the chief constable in his community in Poland before com-



ing to Canada. As such, policing is always a concern of mine.

Minister, across the north, police services have made requests under your 1,000 officers program for the much-needed new hires to ensure law and order across what are very often large geographical areas. We know that the North Bay Police Service has requested four new officers, Thunder Bay has requested eight, Sault Ste. Marie has requested 14 and Sudbury has requested 15. You made a commitment to provide full funding for 60 officers across northern Ontario under your 1,000 officers program.

Will you guarantee today that the police services in North Bay, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury will receive the 41 officers they need, and will you tell us how much of that funding these officers will receive to ensure 100% funding?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I'm glad that the member raised a question about the north, because we're very proud of how we've done this program for the north. What had happened, as you know, is that in the previous government, under their community policing program, they provided a maximum of \$30,000 per officer. When we initiated our program, we raised that to \$35,000 per officer. We met with police officers in the north, we met with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and they said that the north has a particular problem. Because of that problem, they will not be able to take up— notwithstanding that it's \$35,000 now, as opposed to \$30,000, we have to increase it.

I can tell you that a lot of discussion took place, and we finally came up with the number of \$70,000 per officer for the north. We are going to be providing \$70,000 per officer, for 60 places in the north. I can't tell you exactly, but you can do the arithmetic. If there are 60 requests, they will all get them. I can tell you that every police service in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** My question is also for the Minister of Community Safety. In my community of Waterloo, the police responded to 156,000 calls for service last year. That's up 6.1%, as the population increases. Waterloo has asked for 79 new officers to help ensure community safety across the region, Guelph has asked for 13 and Halton for 64, in order to help deal with the very explosive population growth.

Minister, the need for these officers is real, and it's immediate. Will you guarantee today that Waterloo, Guelph and Halton region will receive funding for the 156 new officers they need to ensure community safety when you make your announcement on November 30?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I can't guarantee the number but I can guarantee that they will get officers. But I think it's important to understand that we set guidelines for what we're going to fund. We want to make sure that half of these officers are doing community policing. The other half have got to be involved in youth crime, guns and

gangs, organized crime, indoor marijuana grow-ops, dangerous offenders, domestic violence, Internet luring and child pornography.

It is up to those police services to designate that they in fact are going to be allocating those officers to those particular activities. If they don't, and if they say, "We're not prepared to do that," they will not be eligible for funding. That is why I can't give you an exact number, because we have to take into consideration all of those situations that we have to address.

We will make the announcement at the ending of this month. It will be fair, it will be equitable and it will be transparent.

1530

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Does the McGuinty government believe that seniors struggling with skyrocketing property taxes should be forced out of their homes and on to the streets?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** The minister responsible for seniors.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Of course we don't believe that. We do believe that assessments are only one part of the municipal property tax equation. We do believe that there are tools available to municipalities to mitigate whatever negative impacts there may be resulting from higher assessments that individual taxpayers have endured as a result of this year's assessment. We are concerned about the system. We are looking forward to Mr. Morin's response with respect to issues present at MPAC, and we look forward to working with our municipal partners to ensure that senior citizens aren't penalized, that nobody is unfairly penalized as a result of a change in assessment that may or may not have occurred in the context of broader assessments across not only one particular municipality, but indeed across any number —

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Prue:** Perhaps you might want to explain that in a little bit more detail to the MPP from Northumberland, because in the recent edition of the Coburg Daily Star, Mr. Rinaldi tells struggling seniors, those people who built this province, and some of those who fought for us in time of war, that they, and I quote, "might have to re-think home ownership." He went on to state, and I quote, "If people are on a fixed income and property tax bills keep rising, the choice might be to sell, downsize and live on the difference."

Will the Acting Premier, will the minister ask the MPP for Northumberland to apologize to seniors for his insensitive remarks, and are you prepared to make sure that your government does everything possible so that seniors don't end up on the streets?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The member from Northumberland represents his citizens, including senior citizens,



well and owes nobody an apology. Let me tell you, you know, I can't use what I'm thinking, it's unparliamentary, but that member voted for a \$125 senior property tax credit for senior citizens, and what did you do? You voted against it. You voted against it. You ought to be ashamed of yourself for that. Let's talk about your being booed out of a hall in Ottawa for your position. I'm sure the House isn't aware of that. Tomorrow, I'll table the newspaper account of that particular meeting, when Mr. Prue was booed, literally booed out of a hall in Ottawa. By the way, they were right to do that, because you don't know what you're talking about. The member for Northumberland and many members of this caucus are engaging in an active discussion about the fairness of MPAC and how it works. We welcome the work being done by Mr. Morin, and we look forward—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

New question, the member for Northumberland.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, the previous Tory government closed the Port Hope hospital in the riding of Northumberland, despite public outcry. In response to the public's needs regarding the loss of health-related services in the municipality of Port Hope, our current government announced on Thursday a new community health centre in the municipality of Port Hope, as well as a satellite centre in Trenton, to provide primary health care for individuals and families.

Minister, could you please tell the House about new initiatives such as the community health centre in Port Hope and satellite centre in Trenton.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** This is the one that they call Lou back home. They know him as Lou because he's always there, in the local community, working on behalf of the local community. I was very pleased, on behalf of our government last week, to send a message to the people of Port Hope that, unlike the days when that party was in office, Port Hope will not be forgotten. Port Hope will not have our back turned on it. I too know a little of that feeling, as an MPP from a riding that had a hospital closed by those rascals. But I'm pleased to say that as part of our \$75-million investment in community health centres, we're moving forward with a new community health centre in Port Hope and a satellite community health centre in Trenton. We know that they're an integral part of a good system of primary care, particularly working hard to address those circumstances where the underlying health circumstances require a little bit more. That's what Port Hope is going to get from this government: a little bit more.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** Minister, the community health centres are a great way to enhance access to primary care, but surely the government's doing more. Could you tell the

House what other initiatives the government's launching to enhance access to primary care in Ontario, and could you tell us how those will benefit the residents of my community and all of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Our government's strategy with respect to health care is the renewal of community-based health care services. At the heart of that is the idea that we must renew primary care—accordingly, our government's initiatives with respect to 39 new community health centres, 150 family health teams, the work that we've been doing to increase the size of our medical schools. I'm pleased to say that I'm a part of a government that in two short years has reversed the trend created by those rascals when they were in government that saw policies which—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. You might want to rethink "rascals."

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I withdraw, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw the offensive word "rascals."

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** Say "little rascals."

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Can I replace it with "little rascals"? It's trademarked.

**The Speaker:** Just withdraw. New question.

#### POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety. Kingston has applied for 16—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Order. I would like to be able to get on with petitions in a few minutes. The member for Lanark-Carleton.

**Mr. Sterling:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, Kingston has applied for 16 new officers; Smiths Falls and Gananoque, four each; and Ottawa, 182 officers. Ottawa has received funding for only 90 officers. I don't know what Minister Gerretsen has said publicly with regard to the need for officers in Kingston, but I do know that Minister Watson has publicly said that Ottawa deserves 182 new officers. For once, I agree with Minister Watson. The question is, will Minister Watson deliver for the city of Ottawa and will you deliver for the rest of eastern Ontario?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** If you take a look at the numbers of those requests that came in from municipalities across Ontario, there are far more than we will be able to allocate under the 1,000 officer plan. The previous government, when they had their community policing program, had 1,000 officers. We announced, as a campaign commitment, that we will provide an additional 1,000 officers. Not only are we doing that, but we've extended in perpetuity your program, to the tune of \$30,000 per officer forever. So when we are finished, we will be providing \$67.1 million per year to municipal policing.



We have a formula, and it really has nothing to do with the request that comes in. We will take a look at that formula, so that it's fair, and make sure that it's allocated on the basis of population and other criteria, including those areas that we have designated, and we will then make that allocation.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** My question is also for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

The member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock.

1540

**Ms. Scott:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The city of Kawartha Lakes in my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock has made a submission seeking funding for two new officers under your program, yet they've had to wait over two years to hear your response. The city of Peterborough has requested 11 officers to ensure community safety. Port Hope is seeking three new officers under your program. All these have been made to wait two years since you first promised these officers. Will you guarantee Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough and Port Hope will receive the 16 officers they need to meet community safety concerns on November 30? Will you commit to that today, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** Notwithstanding that you seem to think they've been waiting for two years for my response, the program was just announced on May 18, 2005. All municipalities have been invited to submit their requests and they're going to be reviewed in a way that, if they meet our criteria, if they meet the requirements under this program, they will get their fair share. I can't tell you the exact number because we have to allocate it across the whole province. I can't be in a position where someone says, "Well, how come they got this and we only got that?" It will be transparent. They will be able to see exactly how they were allocated. That is the way the system will work.

## PETITIONS

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here signed by a number of my constituents.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to the community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

### DISABILITY BENEFITS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"People with disabilities are entitled to the full support of their government with respect to income security and the dignity of a job; and

"The Ontario disability support plan does not provide an adequate income to cover the ever-increasing costs of living that people with disabilities face, and those who receive ODSP and find employment are punished with an earnings exemption that is far too low and needs to be increased; and

"An ODSP recipient will have their earnings clawed back by the McGuinty Liberal government if they earn more than just \$160 a month as an individual or only \$235 a month as a family; and

"Employment not only gives people on ODSP the dignity of a job and the pride in making meaningful contributions to their community, it also enables them to augment Ontario's inadequate disability cheque and keep up with the ever-rising cost of living.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for an immediate increase to the employment earnings exemption threshold for ODSP recipients so they are able to keep more of what they earn without the government clawing back their disability support."

I agree with this petition, and send it down by way of David.

### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration resulting in loss of sight if treat-

ment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program."

I will affix my signature to this petition, which I already have, and give it to Nathan.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** "Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

"Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

"Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients" in Ontario "with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

"Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients."

I sign this with my support as well.

### PLANT CLOSURE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** "To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the city of Kenora is a community that depends on the economic contribution of the Abitibi Consolidated paper mill; and

"Whereas Abitibi Consolidated has publicly stated their intention to permanently close one machine and indefinitely idle the other; and

"Whereas the surrounding natural resources should bring an employment and economical benefit to the communities; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario recently relaxed the control of wood rights and allowed the companies to ship wood fibre to other areas to be processed;

"Whereas the Ontario government has allowed for increased electricity rates in northern Ontario;

"I, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Ensure Abitibi Consolidated is committed to maintaining both paper machines in Kenora;

"(2) The government will assist Abitibi Consolidated by reducing electricity rates, subject to point (1) above being guaranteed;

"(3) If Abitibi Consolidated fails to commit to point (1) above, the government shall, through the Minister of Natural Resources, immediately revoke Abitibi Consolidated's wood licence for the Kenora and surrounding area;

"(4) The government shall immediately implement a comprehensive investment strategy for the northern Ontario forest industry, particularly the Kenora area;

"(5) The government will ensure community-based timber commitments remain today and into the future so that community-based employment is sustained."

This petition has been signed by over 130 individuals, and I have affixed my signature as well.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** I read this petition on behalf of my constituents of London-Fanshawe.

"Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I've signed this.



1550

## OPTOMETRY SERVICES

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it has been over 16 years since the last OHIP fee increase for Ontario's optometrists;

"Whereas the remuneration optometrists receive from OHIP for the comprehensive eye care provided to seniors, children, diabetics and others does not cover the costs of providing these services;

"Whereas the OHIP-insured services optometrists provide seniors, children, diabetics and others are no longer sustainable at the current levels of reimbursement;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That it encourage the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately initiate meaningful OHIP fee negotiations with the recognized representative body for Ontario's optometrists, the Ontario Association of Optometrists."

I send this to you, Speaker, by way of page Kmail.

SERVICES FOR THE  
DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I affix my signature in support.

## FIRE AT RECYCLING PLANT

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a fire on October 18, 2005, alerted the neighbours in the vicinity of Refine Industries Ltd., Long Sault, Ontario, to the establishment of a rubber recycling facility in the former Gildan Activewear plant, we, the neighbours of this facility, request that the Legislative

Assembly of Ontario conduct a thorough investigation of the establishment of this facility in a residential neighbourhood and the ensuing fire of October 18, 2005;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Investigate the fire that occurred at Refine Industries Ltd., Long Sault, on October 18, 2005; and

"Through the Ministry of the Environment, determine whether the facility was operating with a valid certificate of approval; and

"If Refine Industries Ltd. was not operating with a valid certificate of approval, prosecution should follow, to the full extent of the law; and

"The neighbours living in the vicinity of this facility at Long Sault do not want to compromise their health by having to breathe in foul odours and/or particulates; and

"Therefore, because of the problems already created in the community by Refine Industries Ltd., it should be closed down permanently."

I shall have this delivered by Andrew, and affix my signature.

## QUEENSWAY CARLETON HOSPITAL

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital is one of the most efficient hospitals in the country;

"Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital's priority should be providing excellent patient care and not money for Paul Martin's Liberal government;

"Whereas the number of senior citizens served by the Queensway Carleton Hospital is growing rapidly in the west end of Ottawa and Nepean;

"Whereas the federal Liberal government led by Paul Martin has a surplus potentially as high as \$10 billion;

"Whereas all provincial political parties in Ontario have acknowledged the significant fiscal imbalance;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Ontario Legislature call upon the federal Liberal government to immediately cancel its plans to dramatically increase the rent for the land now being used by the Queensway Carleton Hospital, and that the hospital be charged only \$1 rent per year."

I'm pleased to sign this petition, as have George Smitherman and Jim Watson.

## MANDATORY RETIREMENT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas existing legislation enforcing mandatory retirement is discriminatory; and

"Whereas it is the basic human right of Ontario citizens over the age of 65 to earn a living and contribute to society; and

"Whereas the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Yukon and the Northwest Territories have also abolished mandatory retirement in various forms; and

"Whereas ending mandatory retirement is a viable means of boosting the Ontario labour force and accommodating the growing need for skilled workers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Ontario government should act by abolishing mandatory retirement in the province of Ontario. This is best achieved by passing Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other acts to end mandatory retirement."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I have a petition from folks who work at the Orillia branch of Simcoe Community Services. It says:

"Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent upon the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I'm very happy to sign this.

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many owners of seasonal trailers kept at campgrounds have raised their concerns over the impact of property taxes on seasonal trailers and the unfairness of imposing a new tax on persons who use minimal municipal services;

"Whereas this new tax will discourage business and tourism opportunities in Ontario and will cause many families to give up their vacation trailers altogether;

"Whereas the administration of this tax will require a substantial investment in staff, time and resources across the province of Ontario;

"Whereas some representatives of the recreational vehicle industry, campground proprietors and trailer

owners have suggested an alternative sticker or tag system to establish fees for seasonal trailers;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario immediately abandon the assessment and taxation of recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis in 2004; and that the government of Ontario consult with all stakeholders regarding the development of a fair and reasonable sticker or tag fee that would apply to recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis."

I affix my signature.

#### NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It is my obligation now to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Attorney General concerning sentencing credit arrangements and hiring of police officers. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Energy concerning hydroelectricity prices. Again, this matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the business of the House for this evening.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is there unanimous consent for the government House leader to move such a motion? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I move that notwithstanding any standing order or the order of the House earlier today, the House continue to meet beyond 6 o'clock for the purposes of completing the two scheduled late shows and consideration of the motion for third reading of Bill 169, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to amend and repeal various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters, following which the Speaker shall adjourn the House until Wednesday, November 16, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker:** The government House leader has moved that notwithstanding any standing order or the order of the House earlier today, the House continue to meet—

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Dispense, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.



1600

## OPPOSITION DAY

### VIOLENT CRIME

### CRIME VIOLENT

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I move that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government,

To recognize that under the watch of the McGuinty Liberal government, the province of Ontario has witnessed a record number of gun-related homicides in 2005; and

To recognize that the province of Ontario has fallen victim to excessive gang-related crime and youth violence with no coordinated youth strategy put forward by the McGuinty Liberal government to address and reverse this trend; and

To recognize that Premier McGuinty and the Attorney General were missing in action this summer when gun homicides were a weekly occurrence and when Ontarians needed their leadership the most; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberal government has failed to make any effort to effectively lobby the federal government to toughen sentencing for gun crimes; and

To keep its promise to hire 1,000 new police officers, not just to promise them over and over, and to keep their promise to "build safe communities with more police and more prosecutors."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Tory has moved opposition day number 3. I'm pleased to recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** In a perfect world, some issues would remain outside of politics. Some issues, like the safety of our children and the safety of our communities and our streets, would be taken for granted as a priority we can all agree on. Unfortunately, there is today, I believe and we believe in the Progressive Conservative Party, a crisis on our streets, a crisis of mounting gun violence.

The crisis is centred on but by no means limited to the city of Toronto, where just last night there were two more shootings, including the fatal shooting of a 29-year-old in the city's west end. But it hasn't been confined to the city of Toronto. In fact, I visited communities over the course of the summer on a repeated basis, whether Belleville, London, Dryden, where these issues of crime, and in particular guns, in many of these communities were raised with me. Last week in Brampton, 18-year-old Shandy Kirpal was ambushed by a gunman in the parking lot of his own high school. Parents and students had to wait in worry as police locked down the entire school.

I was at the anti-gun-violence rally at Yonge-Dundas Square and spoke there on Sunday. It was interesting, because there was someone there from the separate school board who made a point of noting that nowadays we have kids in the high schools practise and have drills

for lockdowns, whereas when he went to school and when I went to school, you practised fire drills. As I said that day, that kind of says it all.

The one in Brampton at the school was one of four separate shootings to take place in a day-and-a-half period of time, including another fatal shooting, this one of a 17-year-old at the intersection of Eglinton and Oakwood Avenue, right here in the city of Toronto. We've now seen close to 50 different homicides as a result of gun violence in the city of Toronto this year, and unfortunately—I regret to say this—it's apparent that the trend is not slowing down. Equally disturbing, or perhaps even more disturbing, is the number of incidents of gun violence among the province's youth, the number of young lives cut short, people who have been killed over the course of this year, due to the growth of a culture that glorifies violence and yet seems to fear no reprisal. I said, again at the rally on Sunday, doesn't it tell you that something is very wrong indeed when the families of Ontario, the kids and the parents of Ontario, fear the criminal gangs more than the gangs fear the legal consequences of their actions in engaging in this kind of activity? It does say something is terribly wrong.

So we have introduced this motion today because the Premier in particular and to some extent—I won't say completely, but to some extent—the Attorney General have just not taken the leadership role, the advocacy role of speaking out against this violence, of speaking up against this violence and making sure they do whatever they can directly and whatever they can as advocates on behalf of the people of Ontario to do something about this issue.

As was referred to in question period today, the same Attorney General of Ontario who held the province and the media spellbound with an endless parade of press conferences on the dangers of pit bulls has not yet seen fit to make similar definitive statements and analysis with anywhere near the same frequency and with anywhere near the same energy and determination as to what this Liberal government is going to do to stem the tide of gang warfare and gun violence that has entire neighbourhoods living in fear. I visited many of them over the course of the last number of months, and it wasn't the first time I had been, but I went over the course of the summer, going from memory, and I visited with people who live there, with law enforcement people, community leaders in St. James Town, Malvern, Rexdale, Flemingdon Park, and Jane and Finch.

I want to talk a little bit today, as I did on Sunday, not on what the experts told me, not on what I read in a report, not on what I heard here in the Legislature, but what those people told me about some of their concerns. The first thing they said—actually, I won't deal with them in order—among three or four things that were the highlight of comments, no matter which neighbourhood you were in, was that we need more police officers on the streets and in the neighbourhoods. I would say that that is one of the reasons why we asked the questions that we did today, because every single bit of extra support that

we can give to our law enforcement professionals will, in turn, help them to help families that are in need.

People told me in those neighbourhoods that they need the extra help. They need it not just, as they said, at times when someone is there to put up yellow tape. They don't just need it when there's been an incident. They need it in order to have police officers in the neighbourhoods forging the kinds of positive relationships with kids and families that are going to be so important going forward to addressing this environment that exists in these neighbourhoods. The Premier himself seemed to recognize this when he included in his election platform 1,000 new police officers who would be on the streets if he were elected to office.

So here we are now, two-years-plus into the mandate, and the unkept commitment to add 1,000 new police officers stands as just one more example among the Premier's 50-odd broken promises and unkept commitments to the people of Ontario. The 1,000 new police officers are not on the streets—not even half of them are on the streets. Even there, where the Minister of Community Safety claims that there are 400 when he rushed forward with those numbers, recognizing this was the week the police would be visiting Queen's Park, and so on and so forth, I think those numbers are seriously in question, and I think that they have all the smell of one of those kinds of shell games in terms of complicated math that the taxpayers are never really expected to understand.

What we have seen is at least half a dozen, maybe seven, press releases on this subject. We have seen announcement after reannouncement after reannouncement from the Premier and the Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety: "Don't worry, the officers are on their way." Well, news releases do not keep the guns out of the hands of the gangs. They do not keep the gangs out of the communities. They do not allow a single child, a single family in Toronto or any other community—Belleville, London, Sudbury, Dryden or anywhere else—to feel a tiny bit more safe. It is the police officers on the streets in those neighbourhoods who are going to make those people feel safe, and I would suggest it is already two years later than it should be for those police officers. The time for action is now, and in fact, it was before now.

The families that I spoke to understand the need for police officers for the reasons I mentioned, not just for protection and enforcement, but so that we can forge those kinds of positive relationships with people who live in those neighbourhoods. Amid all the chatter about pit bulls, amid all the continual press releases about how the new officers are coming—"Don't worry, it's going to happen at some point very soon"—one area where the Liberal summer of silence continues is on fixing the justice system, and that is another theme that I heard more vehemently, with more energy and enthusiasm and determination, from the people who live in those neighbourhoods than from anybody else, because how can they have faith in our justice system—this is what they said to

me—when gang members who are arrested are back on the streets?

Do you remember the stories where they were cheering as the gang members were taken away, only to sort of think to themselves, "Boy, maybe it wasn't such a good idea to be cheering, because I just saw that guy back in the neighbourhood"? It seemed a matter of hours later, thanks to the justice system being run by this government and by this Attorney General. How much co-operation can our law enforcement professionals expect from communities in need if they know that violent criminals are likely to be able to plead down to lesser charges and to return to terrorize these neighbourhoods once more, it seems, in a matter of days? How much faith can we expect people to have in the justice system where we see the crown prosecutors, under the supervision of this Attorney General, day after day, week after week, doing these three-for-one and two-for-one deals, where, quite literally, you have people, as told to us by the police, walking out of a courtroom minutes after being sentenced, never going to jail? They were sentenced to years in jail, and because of this mathematical let's-make-a-deal kind of arrangement that the Attorney General continues to countenance, we have people walking out of the court.

The people don't get it. I don't get it. The people don't support it, they don't understand it and they think this practice should be done away with, where people are getting three-for-one and two-for-one deals: "Let's make a deal."

1610

We did finally hear some tougher talk from the minister while he was in the Yukon at the ministers' meetings. I'm prepared to recognize some limited progress, however small and however late. The reason I say it's small is because there were no specifics from this minister in the paper that he put in. It had some good sentiments in it but no specifics in terms of what he was looking for on behalf of the people of Ontario with respect to tougher sentencing for gun crimes and other crimes he would see included. And, lo and behold, that really let the federal minister off the hook, because when he gave his news conference, he too had no specifics with respect to what he would do. He just said, "We'll introduce legislation soon." Well, you know what? If there had been the kind of advocacy there should have been in the winter, spring and summer of 2005 from this government, including the Premier of this province, it would be law today, as opposed to being something now that is going to perhaps fall prey to the election timetable in Ottawa.

The other thing I heard from people in these communities was that they understand and they are pleading for some help in terms of addressing the social roots of crime. They talk about the need for more facilities, more programs for kids, more employment opportunities, recreational facilities and positive role models, to ensure that kids don't fall into the gangs and violence trap, and we support—I support—very strongly the need for that.



If I was to find fault with what we're doing right now, it is in the fact that what we have today from all levels of government is a patchwork quilt of these kinds of programs. You have a city program here, a provincial program there and a federal program over here. Isn't it kind of interesting that the Prime Minister of Canada came to town to make an announcement and he was accompanied by the mayor but not by somebody from the provincial government? On another day, you'll see the provincial government and the city making an announcement together but the federal government is not there. There is no coordination to this. It is not a comprehensive strategy; it is a patchwork quilt of programs. If handled on that kind of basis, where there's an initiative here and an initiative there—we haven't really determined what the best practices are nor taken the programs that work, whether it's Pathways to Education, the San Romano Way initiative or others, and said, "Let's take these across the city of Toronto, to Ottawa, to London or wherever they're needed." I would hope that we could see some leadership from this government, saying, "Fine. Let's get the governments together to have the kind of coordinated, comprehensive strategy that can help to address this problem." That is such an important element of making sure that the problem is successfully addressed.

In concluding my own comments, I would hope that the Premier of this province especially—I think if you check the record, he has had virtually nothing to say about this. The head of the government of the province of Ontario has had almost nothing to say, in a summer when gun violence was a problem not just in Toronto—certainly a terrible problem here—but in London, where I think they now have the highest number of homicides they've had in a long time and I think the highest rate of homicides in Ontario. It is a problem in Belleville. The police chief told me that when I was there, but fortunately it has not manifested itself in the same way, in homicides and so on.

I would hope that he can become an advocate. It's never too late to do that. He can help the Attorney General. The Attorney General can be more specific in his advocacy, more urgent in his advocacy. The Premier can be more urgent in his advocacy, to say to the federal government, where it's their responsibility, "Get on with it," and where it's the provincial government, "Get on with making the changes." Stop the three-for-one deals. Start to have a more comprehensive strategy for kids and families in terms of the programs that are needed.

We are introducing this motion so that we can have this discussion here today, but the hope as to the result is to spur this government out of its slumber and on with some real, specific, concrete action; not a hodgepodge of little things here and there, not just more press releases, but some real, specific, concrete action to address the problem.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I'll agree with one thing the leader of the official opposition said,

and that is that the time for action was some time ago. That's why, from the very beginning of this government taking office, we put into place something that had a real impact. It was to—

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** Bring your own wine?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** I didn't heckle the leader of the official opposition, although it's certainly your right, Mr. Baird, to do so.

We put together specialized gun prosecutors with the guns and gangs task force made up of specialized police officers, the idea being that, unlike the way it used to work, where police would do their work, and if a particular issue arose, they would in some cases call crown attorneys for advice, instead, we would have police officers and prosecutors working together from day one.

Obviously, organized crime has become more organized. The gangs have become more organized. That means we have to be more organized in terms of the evidence we put together, the wiretaps, the way in which we gather the evidence, so that it can hold up. Those challenges, according to then-Chief Fantino and now Chief Blair, were very well addressed by adding gun crowns to the guns and gangs team. Of course, we have to measure our success on the train of results. Based upon the very, very significant takedowns undertaken by the Toronto Police Service under the leadership of Chief Fantino and now under the leadership of Chief Blair, we saw real changes and real results that came out of the guns and gangs task force.

Now, that didn't start last summer. That didn't start last spring. That started really from the moment this government took office. We got it up and running, and it was announced in January 2004.

The idea that Mr. Tory has been talking about gun violence for a significant period of time is quite interesting. I, like everybody else, followed the mayor's race quite closely. I also followed the issues that were of great importance to the leader of the official opposition. I understand we had a very tragic summer, so it shouldn't be surprising that he would engage in the issue at the time in which we had a tragic summer. It's positive that the leader of the official opposition is becoming more familiar with the issues of gun violence and the issues facing our communities, but this is not something new to this government. It's not something new at all.

When all is said and done, it is clear—just look at the public accounts—that this government has made and is making greater investments in police services than the previous government did when they were in office. That's a significant investment. This government established a prosecutorial police guns and gangs task force that, in fact, undertook some very positive work. But it gets better. Importantly, we have added a federal presence. The federal prosecutors have now agreed to join that, which means that drug crime, obviously a significant part of the demand for gun crime, is now going to be folded into the guns and gangs task force.



Furthermore, as a result of the additional police officers and crown attorneys added to the guns and gangs task force, Chief Blair has indicated that other chiefs of police, other police services outside of Toronto, will also be participating. So we'll be able to bring that expertise and assist and work together with other police services.

The supply and demand of gun crime means we also have to choke gun supply. That means addressing legal guns, legally stored guns, and trying to stop those legal guns from ending up in the illegal gun market, for it is from there that they cause the human misery that they do.

So what do we do along those lines? It means offering gun amnesties to get the legal guns that are unwanted off the streets. That's one less gun that could be the subject of a break and enter, one less gun that could be stolen and end up in the illegal gun trade. I know the Conservatives don't support gun amnesties. I understand that. But gun amnesties can make a small difference, if only to reduce the risk of a legal gun ending up in the illegal gun trade.

We need to have initiatives such as Crime Stoppers. Obviously, we're very supportive of the Crime Stoppers tip line, which has already led to close to 100 tips, which are all being investigated and, in addition, close to a dozen illegal handguns being turned in. If we can get just one gun taken off the streets and avoid the human misery that it has caused, then we have accomplished something.

These programs, the gun amnesty and the gun tip line, can and will make a difference. But obviously much more needs to be done. That's why we need to have mandatory minimum sentences increased and in place, particularly for those—

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** Tell your crowns not to bargain them away.

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** Mr. Flaherty is impugning the crowns of Ontario. It's a shameful moment for a former Attorney General.

As I was saying, what we need to do is ensure that we have the offences and the penalties in place that target the precursor crimes that lead to the serious gun tragedies that take place. That's why, when we went to Whitehorse, Minister Kwinter and I, what we did was target very, very specific offences: illegal trafficking, illegal smuggling. These are the crimes that lead to the flow of guns on to the streets and cause the tragedies. That's why we fought for and achieved new Criminal Code offences for break and enter, stealing a gun; robbery, stealing a gun: obviously particularly pernicious offences that lead to the flow of sometimes legal guns, and illegal guns, into the illegal gun trade. Again, that leads to human misery.

1620

We also achieved a number of other initiatives with respect to bail, with respect to additional mandatory minimums, which will also be acted upon. I say to the leader of the official opposition, it is almost too bad that he wasn't able to be there in Whitehorse so that he could have understood the contrast. When his justice ministers found themselves in the federal-provincial-territorial justice ministers' meeting, oh, they were advocates all

right, but they never achieved anything—nothing on conditional sentence changes, nothing on dangerous offences changes, nothing on new mandatory minimums, nothing on Criminal Code changes. Our government, under the leadership of Monte Kwinter and a team that went off to Whitehorse, hammered out and achieved a unanimous agreement amongst federal, provincial and territorial justice ministers which the federal justice minister has taken to cabinet. It means that, as long as Parliament is around in a week or so, we're going to see those matters before Parliament. Parliament will have an opportunity to express its denunciation of gun crime.

That government, the Conservative government, had eight years to get one change out of the federal government. They got nothing. We went up to Whitehorse in a federal-provincial justice ministers' meeting and achieved an historic accord which is going to provide real, meaningful punishments and deterrents when it comes to those who want to participate in the gun trade. It is now clear: If you want to play any part in the gun trade, if you want to play a part in the flow of legal guns to illegal guns or otherwise play a part in gun violence, you're going to go to jail, and you're going to go to jail for a significant period of time.

I look forward to further debate from members.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm very pleased to be able to stand today in this House and speak in support of this opposition day motion by my leader, John Tory. I couldn't agree more with some of the comments he has made. There are two things I want to zero in on. One is what I would call the inaction by the government. The second, of course, is the 1,000 police officers, which we've been pushing extremely hard in this House and on behalf of the citizens of the province of Ontario to make sure that the government would deliver on that promise.

Our leader, John Tory, identified the problem clearly last December. Over the course of the last 10 and a half months, Mr. Tory, on at least 20 occasions, has called on the government to be more active in the pursuit of gun crime and gun violence. The Attorney General claims that he formed the guns and gang task force in January 2004, but the fact of the matter was, the guns and gangs task force was actually started by the Toronto Police Service in 2002. They made a few amendments to the layout of the plans, but quite frankly, the guns and gang task force has been around since 2002.

I just wanted to point out that on 20 occasions in the last year, our leader, on behalf of our caucus, has called on the McGuinty government to get tough on crime. As I just heard my colleague ahead of me, Mr. Flaherty, say a few moments ago, after 12 years now, we're seeing—prior to, I guess, an immediate election—suddenly the federal government say they're going to listen to their provincial counterpart here in Ontario, and they're finally going to get tough on crime: after 12 years. I don't believe for a moment that it will happen. You can come out with all the promises you've made, but until I see legislation, until I see it passed in this House, I can't



believe for a moment that it's actually going to happen. It's just one more time that the government has tried to react to a lot of publicity.

I believe that last night we had our 47th homicide in the city of Toronto, in the GTA, in this year alone. If there ever was a time when we need immediate action, it's now. What we usually see happening from this government is that after there are a lot of headlines for three or four days, then we'll see a fancy press conference at metro police headquarters or we'll see it out at York region headquarters or something, and that's when we'll get all the folks together and they'll tell us how tough they're going to get on crime.

But let's go back for a second to the fact that we did question the minister today on the 1,000 new police officers. That was a promise made by both governments in the last election. It was made by both governments to add 1,000 new community officers to the streets of our cities and towns. These are net new officers, I believe, beyond the growth of areas. What we're seeing today is that after 26 months—26 months—finally, at the end of this November, we're going to see where some of those officers will be allocated. It was made very clear today that those communities are not going to see the number of officers that they requested. They didn't request them because they didn't need them, they requested them because those communities need them.

We named off a bunch of examples here today of the 1,000 new police officers and where they would be allocated, and we're not getting an answer. I'm assuming there will be a fancy announcement, probably downstairs or maybe at Toronto police services, or maybe we'll go out to Durham this time. We'll get the red banner up on the wall, and they'll say "safe communities" and Monte and Mr. Bryant will stand there—maybe even the Premier this time—and actually say where those officers will actually be positioned.

But if they would have actually started the program when they were creating that task force back in January 2004, if they would have started the 1,000 new police officers program then, we'd actually see officers on the streets today. I've said to the media a number of times and I've said to all kinds of stakeholders, like some of our OPP and our PAO folks, that there's no reason why that couldn't have happened. We should have had at least a third of those officers on the streets of our communities today. Perhaps it might have saved a few lives if we would have actually moved quicker on it. I don't know.

As I said, we are now 26 months in. They are claiming that they're going to cover some of the officers retroactively. But a lot of the police services went ahead and hired because of the high growth rates in those areas, for example, let's say York region or Durham region, maybe Halton, Peel. Those are areas that have tremendously high growth. What's happened is that the communities have gone ahead because they've got an additional assessment, and they've actually needed new officers regardless. So they've hired additional new officers for those areas. Mr. Kwinter is including those now. He's

including the officers who are hired due to the growth in these areas. We're saying that we need 1,000 net new officers above and beyond the growth areas and above and beyond the numbers held prior to 2003.

As we move in this direction, it's evident—I think every member of our caucus, the Progressive Conservative caucus, met today with a member of the Police Association of Ontario. That's my understanding, talking to Mr. Bruce Miller this morning. I think it's very clear—they identified that their top priority probably was the fact that they want to put those officers on the street for the safety of our communities. I couldn't agree more.

As we proceed in the next few months, we will be keeping a very close eye. We want to see those officers on the street. We don't want to see this fudging of the numbers. We don't want to see a lot of spin put on it. We don't want to see any more announcements. We want to see the officers hired. We want to know when the communities are going to be reimbursed for their money and when we will actually see police officers with their cruisers out working in our communities across our province.

We had a very interesting seminar here last Saturday with the community-based policing officers, community-based policing committees in the metro area here in the city of Toronto, and it was clear there as well. As I talked to community-based policing chairpeople and members of those committees, they couldn't point out enough times how important it was that we have those officers on the streets as soon as possible.

I do appreciate this opportunity today. I know that my colleague Mr. Runciman will be making a few comments as well here. I believe Mr. Flaherty is going to say a few words as well. I hope everybody in this House, including the Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, will support Mr. Tory's resolution. It's a very important resolution and I hope all members will find it so important for the safety of our communities that they will get up and vote in favour of it this afternoon.

1630

**Ms. Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I'm pleased to rise to speak to this motion. I want to state at the outset that the Ontario government under Premier Dalton McGuinty has a strong but balanced approach, both tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime.

I want to remind the leader of the official opposition, Mr. Tory, about how the former Conservative government, under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, impacted programs that served children and youth. Many front-line workers I've spoken to, who have dedicated years to providing services to youth and youth at risk, have all had a common theme, and that is—again to the Leader of the Opposition—that your government devastated and lost many prevention programs for youth at risk. Not only did you not have any coordinating approach, but you actually eroded those programs. What happened as well is that you brought in the Safe Schools Act and then you didn't provide any support for suspended youth.



I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition about the effects this caused, and the effects of losing community use of schools. I've spoken to the Boys and Girls Clubs association, and what they've told me is this, and this is one of the effects around 2000-01: There was a program that was geared to students to stay in school. Then there was a program provided in east Scarborough, and there were eight programs, four nights a week, geared to children from ages six to 10. The use of schools for these programs went from not costing the Boys and Girls Club anything—then the Tories, the Conservatives, decided that schools had to charge huge rates if anyone wanted to use the school space. So it went from zero dollars to \$1,000 per evening.

What happened? The Boys and Girls Club could not afford to pay this, and overnight they lost 800 children from being able to use those facilities. Those children have become teenagers, and they did not have the benefit of these after-school programs that would have provided them access to athletic and other types of activities. They lost, as well, the employment of 15 youths who used to run those programs who were from families on social assistance. They lost 12,000 hours of programs because they were terminated. This all happened under the Conservative time in office. This, in my estimation, is also a cause of what is happening today. Again in east Scarborough, the indoor soccer team was cancelled because school facilities went from \$5,000 a year to \$55,000 a year, and it affected 5,000 kids.

In 2001, I met with groups in this province, with basketball groups, and I met with Boys and Girls Clubs. They were all in a panic about the loss of these programs. Do you know what? The Conservatives sat there and said, "It's not an issue. This doesn't have anything to do with crime. This has to do with community use of schools. How's that going to affect anything?" Their short-sightedness, in my opinion, is what is creating in large part some of the things that are happening today, and that's what the experts are saying as well. I say to you that it is our job: What we're trying to do is rebuild what was eroded, and it is not an easy task because once you lose those programs, it takes years to rebuild them. I would say, and I'm going to say it very strongly, that the former Conservative government has to take responsibility for eroding all those programs that helped kids all through this province.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I don't have a lot of time, approximately 10 minutes. I could speak on this issue all day with respect to the failings of the McGuinty Liberal government in terms of community safety.

I want to point out one frequent error, which the Attorney General made today. He mentioned that our leader, Mr. Tory, when he was campaigning for the mayoralty of the city of Toronto, didn't reference law and order and justice, but indeed, as we all know, it was the centrepiece of his campaign. One of his proposals was 400 additional police officers for the city of Toronto, which his opponent Mr. Miller at the time said was

unnecessary and too expensive. So I wanted to correct the record. We could spend all day correcting the record of the Attorney General in terms of many of his public comments.

What I want to talk about in my brief time is the false front this government is putting on, this misinformation campaign with respect to, "Oh, are we tough on crime," the pit bull fighter over there, jumping in front of the cameras at every occasion, telling the public, "I'm going to be tough on crime. We're going to crack down on gun crime. We're really there for you. Public safety is at the forefront of our agenda." Well, that is a false front.

The budget really tells the story. I think the only person who actually reported on this was Antonella Artuso of the Toronto Sun, a very dedicated and informed individual covering Queen's Park who pointed out that they were proposing in the budget to cut \$300 million out of the justice ministries. In reality, we've seen documents that indicate the actual cut is going to be closer to \$340 million. So what they're saying publicly versus what's happening behind the curtains is radically different.

I want to talk about a number of things with respect to this. Youth crime: The Attorney General was going to this conference he talked about so proudly this afternoon. One of the things he wanted to talk about was his concerns about increasing youth crime and soft sentences. I was sitting in this House when our government, the former government, expressed concerns to the federal officials about the changes that were being proposed for the Youth Criminal Justice Act, this new act to replace the Young Offenders Act. The McGuinty Liberal opposition supported those changes and in fact has embraced them. That's what's happening, behind the scenes, with respect to pre-charge diversion. It's significant. They've emptied half of the young offender secure and open custody beds in this province by pre-charge diversion and other methods. We know that one of the first things they did was shut down Project Turnaround. That was a strict discipline camp that was extremely successful in reducing recidivism among young offenders. In looking at some of these private documents, we know they're looking at extending pre-charge diversion for more violent young offender offences.

I had a police officer telling me the other day of a young offender who had been in trouble on a number of occasions and got a slap on the wrist, who was caught stealing a car. He was 15 years of age. Can you guess what his penalty was for stealing a car in the province of Ontario? A warning letter. That's the sort of thing that's happening in the province under the McGuinty Liberal government.

One of the first things they did as well was to transfer violent young offenders from the ministry of corrections to this new children's ministry. They're very understanding, compassionate people. They transfer violent young offenders from corrections to a children's ministry. That's the sort of thing that's happening behind the scenes.



They're also talking about emptying the jails to save money, by moving remands out to prisoner advocate associations, rather than housing them. These could be very violent people. Rather than remanding them to custody, they're talking about sending them out to the John Howard Society, the Salvation Army and Elizabeth Fry to house these people. What's the purpose of this? Again, to save money, and public safety be damned.

1640

We also know that with respect to this cost-saving exercise they've engaged in behind the scenes, under the cover of darkness—we've raised one issue, which they won't admit to—they're looking at transferring parole board responsibilities from the Ontario Board of Parole to the federal parole board. We know what a horrific, horrendous record the federal board has in terms of the early release of individuals who have committed horrific crimes.

We talked about the DNA bank that we set up, named after Christopher Stephenson, Christopher's Law. An individual who committed a horrific crime, murdering Christopher Stephenson after a sexual assault—a pedophile—was let out by the federal board of parole. We can list those horrific decisions all day. This government, to save \$3 million, wants to transfer that public safety responsibility to the federal government. That is, I think, frightening and alarming. It's another thing that's kept under wraps and, for whatever reasons, the media don't tend to pursue many of these issues.

The Crime Control Commission is another organization that I think performed some pretty effective work over the past eight years. They disbanded the Crime Control Commission. They left the number in the phone book and had someone answering the phone saying, "Crime Control Commission," but it was an empty vessel. That's the kind of thing this government engages in.

We know they have virtually gutted the victims' office. They have a VJF surplus of \$40 million, yet they couldn't pay the way for the French and Mahaffey families and their lawyer to attend Karla Homolka's hearing in Montreal a few weeks ago. They had to pay for it themselves, or their lawyer had to pick up the tab to represent the families at that hearing. That's the sort of shameful conduct, despite the Attorney General, when he was going to be in front of the cameras, making all sorts of public hay from the Homolka situation. He was out there every day, saying, "We're going to get tough on her and make sure she doesn't do anything." Here she is appealing the restrictions placed on her. It's not in public view and there are not a lot of headlines to be made. We can't even break into the VJF, but this is quite permissible. The Attorney General could have done this, and provided the funds so those families could have been there, and their counsel could have been compensated for the expenses he incurred in being present and putting his concerns and the families' concerns forward.

Our leader, Mr. Tory, talked about judicial discretion, and we know this is a significant problem that the government doesn't want to talk about. These two- and

three-for-ones have made the justice system something of a joke. We talk about a mandatory minimum for a gun crime that's on the books of four years. What's happening is that if someone is in custody for 18 months and the judge says, "I'm going to give you two-for-one credit"—that's pretty normal across the system at the moment, two-for-one credit for 18 months—that's 36 months' credit, which is three years off a four-year mandatory minimum, for a one-year. We have mandatory release after three quarters of the sentence is served. So we have that individual walking out the gates after nine months. That's what's happening. That's the reality.

We talked briefly about emptying jails. I know there is a plan afoot to try and empty about 2,000 jail beds in Ontario; for example, closing the Don jail and not replacing it with a remand facility in Ontario. That's the sort of thing that I could go on at length about, but I want to leave some time for the former Attorney General to get on the record as well.

We talked about programs to provide youth with alternatives. We are in support of that, but to suggest that that's the only problem in terms of gun crime is mistaken. One of the recent crimes we saw in October was where a young fellow, a 17-year-old, and his group of friends donned balaclavas and armed themselves with sticks and pipes and set out to rumble with an opposing group of teens. It was an episode reminiscent of West Side Story. Media reports said that the individual who died in that situation was an honour student at Woodbridge College, a man who lived in a good family and had various opportunities provided for him and his family in our society. So to try and focus in on one area, to say that's the whole problem, that we're not providing enough programs and there's not enough money being poured into that one sector, is misleading people. It's misleading the public. Certainly, that's an area we have to focus on as well, but we have to get tough on these very vicious people who are committing these crimes in our province.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd ask the member for Leeds-Grenville to withdraw the word "misleading."

**Mr. Runciman:** Mr. Speaker, if you say so, I will withdraw.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** I'm delighted to be able to join the debate on the opposition day motion. I'd like to look at some of the assertions that I happen not to agree with.

For example, the assertion that the McGuinty Liberal government has failed to make any effective effort to lobby the federal government is absolute nonsense. Both Minister Kwinter and Minister Bryant have persistently, and I might add successfully, lobbied the federal government. In fact, just this week I was delighted to be up in the Jane-Finch area when Prime Minister Martin was there to make his announcement. As a result of our lobbying, in fact the federal government is going to toughen sentences.

The Leader of the Opposition said that there were no details. Perhaps he wasn't there, and I can share with him



because I was listening carefully. The federal government is proposing a legislative package that includes increasing mandatory minimum penalties for firearms smuggling, trafficking and the illegal possession of loaded handguns in a public place, expanding prohibition order provisions, restricting the availability of parole for violent firearms offences and facilitating witness testimony and protection. It also includes two new offences: breaking and entering with intent to steal a firearm, and robbery where a firearm is stolen. Prime Minister Martin reflected that in fact this was in response to the conversation with the federal and provincial justice ministers.

In particular, in response to urban violence in the city of Toronto, Minister Cotler announced a formal agreement with the province of Ontario to create dedicated, integrated teams of federal and provincial officials to collaborate and coordinate efforts to prosecute gun crimes. Prosecutors will be cross-designated to represent both the Attorneys General of Canada and Ontario.

I don't know about you, Speaker, but that sounds like detail to me, a lot of very specific detail about the success of our lobbying effort to make sure that the federal government toughens its approach to gun crimes. I would think that if the opposition leader would like to be helpful, he might want to lobby his federal counterpart not to dissolve the federal Legislature but actually to allow this legislation to go forward.

The next thing that I noticed is that the opposition leader is asking that we keep our promise to hire 1,000 new police officers. This is one of these things where I think the opposition is having a problem understanding, "Here's the schedule, and here's how we'll follow the schedule." In fact, we have followed the schedule, so let me share what we said.

We announced in this year's budget, in May, that we would be going forward with our 1,000 new officers commitment. We said that the schedule is as follows: We will send in August our application package to the police services boards. We did that on schedule, as announced. We said that in September the deadline for applications would happen. We did that on schedule, as announced, and had an enthusiastic response from police services boards all over the province. On schedule, last week, the review committee met to examine the applications, and in late November, on schedule, as promised, we will be notifying police services boards all over the province of the approvals. We will be flowing this in the way that the police services boards and police chiefs asked us to do. They said, "We would like you to put part of the money into officers who have been hired between October 2003"—the date of our election—"and this spring. We will be funding 400 officers in that form and we'd like you to form 600 officers that are new hires."

So we are doing what the police community asked us to do in the way we are flowing the money. There will be 1,000 new officers over the four years of our mandate, and we are simply following the announced schedule. I'm sorry that the opposition doesn't seem to understand following schedules.

1650

Now we have the question of no coordinated youth strategy. As Mr. Runciman I think just aptly demonstrated, one of the problems with the Tory government was that they didn't actually believe in prevention. I don't think they ever quite got it, that if you are going to have prevention programs, if you are going to reduce serious crime, you need to start by working with youth, in particular youth at risk but also all youth. So let me tell you some of the actions we have taken to deal with prevention of crime and violence among our youth.

First of all, for the last two summers, the summer of 2004 and the summer of 2005, we provided half a million dollars each summer to enable the creation of 300 summer jobs in the high-risk communities in Toronto, those communities that were experiencing the most youth violence. We were in there making sure that the kids had summer jobs and were not running around getting into trouble.

We have funded project PEACE, which is specific funding that flows through the Toronto police, to work with young people in the communities and specifically targeting gun violence and programs that help to intervene and prevent gun violence.

We have invested \$1 million in five projects that will help 100 at-risk youth work their way through pre-apprenticeship training programs so that they will have access to apprenticeship training programs. That means that kids who are out of school, out on the street, who weren't able to graduate, are getting back into pre-apprenticeship training and will have an opportunity to make something of their lives.

Community use of schools: \$20 million each and every year to make sure that what happened under the previous government, which was a loss of use of school space for community use, is reinstated.

I'm proud to be chairing the safe schools action team, and we will be announcing this week our plans for bullying prevention plans in every school. We have already announced the consultation dates to review the Safe Schools Act, which has been the subject of a great deal of controversy, brought in by the previous government ostensibly with their get-tough-on-youth approach, but has been shown to have some serious problems and in fact isn't being shown to necessarily be the final word on how to keep our schools safe. So we will be reviewing that act and making sure that we are handling youth at risk properly.

There are a whole bunch of things happening in our coordinated youth strategy, and I'm very proud of our strategy.

**Mr. Flaherty:** In the time available, I'll speak about some of the issues raised. I must say the member for Guelph-Wellington reflects the attitude of the federal Liberal Party and, no doubt, the Liberal Party of Ontario, the sort of photo op, "We'll give you a cheque," patronizing, condescending attitude toward what is a very serious issue of young people in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada killing other young people in the drug trade. This



is not a light matter. This isn't a matter that gets corrected with, "We'll write a cheque." This is a very serious matter.

When I met last Monday night with the black coalition in Toronto at Jane and Finch, they were concerned. These are 23 organizations that came together. The Prime Minister of this country had not even responded to their invitation to meet, but he was there the next day, at Jane and Finch, and I gather the member from Guelph-Wellington was there too, for the photo op and for the cheque. Isn't that a sad commentary on the lack of seriousness with which Liberals take this very serious issue in this province?

Then we have the Attorney General this afternoon in this place—and I know a little bit about that office and the responsibilities of that office, having held it—getting up and saying, "Here's the solution. I'm telling the federal government they ought to do A, B, C and D." All of a sudden, Professor Cotler, who is the current Minister of Justice, is having this conversion at the last moment, at the last breath of a Parliament. The Liberals, having been in power for 12 years plus there, and this government, having been in power for two years plus here, all of a sudden are going to get tough. How does he get tough on crime? He tells another government what to do, what they ought to do. Why doesn't he tell his crown attorneys, and he has the power to do this, "Thou shall not negotiate away, plea bargain away, minimum sentences for the use of a gun in a violent offence in Ontario"? That's in the Criminal Code now. That's within his power. Why doesn't he do what he has the power to do rather than say, "Oh, some other government ought to solve—"?

It's just fascinating. The Leader of the Opposition, our leader, said this afternoon, "What about this dead time business that goes on in our courts, where judges give two-to-one credit, and usually three-to-one credit in Toronto, for someone who spent time in the Don jail or in a county jail? What's that about?" That's judicial mathematics. He's the Attorney General of the province of Ontario. He has the crown attorneys on Bay Street. He's the one who can launch the appeals and fight that judicially created release mechanism, extra credit mechanism.

You know what happens—and I've been listening around the province of Ontario. Someone got arrested in one of our counties recently: violent crime, involved organized crime, bikers, and six years was the sentence. In this country, that means you are eligible for full parole one third of the way through; that's two years. The person had served 10 months in the local jail; double time according to the judicial mathematics is 20 months. He is going to be eligible for full parole: two years—24 months—and 20 months' credit: four months for a violent criminal offence. That's with the six years that people read about in the newspapers. We need truth in sentencing in this province and in this country.

The Attorney General then does another photo op. Here's what he does: He gets the police, and the task force or whatever they call it, to arrest more than 40 peo-

ple. It was about two months ago in Toronto. He makes a big deal of it, gets on the front page of the newspapers and says that this shows the effectiveness of what they're doing: removing guns from the street. Do you know that more than 30 of the people who were arrested—and this is according to the defence counsels who have told me about this—were out on the street the next day, with the consent of the crown. They're out on bail already, back in the community already, three out of four of them, more or less, the day after they were arrested.

We have to get serious about fighting crime. We have to get serious about getting guns off the street. If you carry a gun in Ontario, in the Dominion of Canada, and it's not a registered gun, obviously, if you're in criminal territory, if that's what your intention is, then you ought to go to prison. We need to be clear about that. We need to provide certainty to those who would violate the safety of our communities. I certainly support the resolution brought by our leader today.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm pleased, on behalf of New Democrats, the New Democratic Party here at Queen's Park, to speak in support of this resolution. As you know, the Police Association of Ontario is here at Queen's Park today. I just left members of the Niagara Regional Police Service and Staff Sergeant Steve MacLeod, a long-time police officer—I've known him as long as he's been a police officer—and a darn good cop. But he's one of many down in Niagara who are struggling with incredibly low levels of resources, and low levels of staffing, to cope with crime that has become more dangerous, more sophisticated, more high-tech and more demanding than it's ever been. So I join this debate leading off with nothing but praise for members of the Niagara Regional Police Service. They serve their communities with courage and professionalism, with true professionalism. I have known many of them for many years and have seen them work, and also have witnessed the dangers they expose themselves to on a daily basis, like cops everywhere else in Ontario.

But let's address, let's begin to address, let's begin to address very specifically—it's incredible. Throughout the course of the summer months, and now into the fall, as we approach winter, you have Liberal provincial leaders who somehow want to pretend that all is well in Toronto. It's, "Oh, let's not scare away the tourists. Let's try to pretend that the statistics demonstrate that, heck, 10 years ago was perhaps the parallel of this." Well, horse feathers, when there's been, for all intents and purposes, a shooting a day, day after day after day, week after week, month after month, and a slaughter on the streets of Toronto, almost inevitably young people being shot at and slaughtered by other young people armed with what appears to be some pretty incredibly potent firepower. These aren't BB guns; these aren't air pistols.

**1700**

Whether it's as a result of reading the press reports of this orgy of shooting and murders here in Toronto or listening to Chief Blair or other police officers in Toronto directly involved in the investigations of these shootings,



or whether it's talking and listening to community leaders from across the city, the impression one gets, a very legitimate one, is that gangs out there are armed to the teeth. You've got to wonder whether the police are literally outgunned in the total scheme of things. For some in the community to insist that this isn't something about which people should get excited, that people should stay calm and maybe just let this pass as if it's some sort of adolescent fad, that it ranks with disco as something that's going to come and go and in short order be nothing other than an unpleasant memory—well, I say there is a crisis. I say that the government of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty and his Liberals, has failed the people of Toronto, failed the victims of those murders and their families and failed the people of Ontario for not responding to this crisis with a level of extreme urgency.

Look, New Democrats, Howard Hampton and Marilyn Churley amongst others, have been out there. Howard has been visiting with communities across the province and certainly here in the city of Toronto. Howard Hampton has been visiting neighbourhoods that appear to be the turf of some of these gangs, meeting with young people and their parents. New Democrats have been very clear about the need for the restoration of those programs, job programs, training programs, school retention programs. Howard Hampton and the New Democrats have been very clear about this government's so-called Safe Schools Act and the extent to which it has become the gang recruitment act, because some of the most troubled kids in schools are being tossed out on the street, where they then become ripe fodder for gang recruitment.

While I hope everybody here understands the need to begin investing promptly in these community-based programs, in these neighbourhood-based programs that have the preventive quality that is designed to keep kids out of gangs and out of gang life, and hopefully to prevent them from getting armed with handguns in the first place, let's face it: Those programs and the process of instituting them, or reinstituting them or restoring them, in and of themselves aren't going to stop the shooting that may well happen tonight, are they? It's my view that first and foremost the Toronto police force, Toronto Police Service, needs active, distinct, clear support from this provincial government, from Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, in getting new police officers promptly out on the streets of Toronto, because the first objective surely has got to be to harvest those handguns that are out there. As a layperson, I don't think it's inappropriate to observe that a police presence and adequate staffing will go a long way to doing that, to getting guns off the street.

Where are the federal Liberals when it comes to stopping the guns at the border? Your grandma has a hard time bringing across a couple of pieces of clothing from Niagara Falls, New York, without being subjected to GST and PST and all the forms she's got to fill out, but scores and hundreds of handguns are crossing that border on a monthly basis.

It was interesting, because there was a press conference a week and a half ago. The Attorney General was

there, the wonderful Minister of Correctional Services, the Solicitor General, Mr. Kwinter, was there, a person for whom everybody here has great regard, and the poor chief of police, poor Chief Blair. I felt bad for him. Here's the chief of police of the city of Toronto, which is being plagued with this crisis of gunfire, and what do the Attorney General and the Solicitor General make him do? They make him participate in an announcement around a gun amnesty, making it quite clear that legal guns can be turned in during this gun amnesty. Well, for Pete's sake, legal guns could always be turned in because they're legal. Nothing's going to happen to you if you turn in a legal gun; it's legal. You don't have to turn it in because it's not illegal.

**Mr. Flaherty:** I get it.

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Flaherty gets it, but those poor folks—I mean, the press, the gangs behind the cameras, the people with the little Sony dictaphones, the newspaper people, they were giggling. There were chuckles coming out of the press who were there, because here's the city of Toronto, and Dalton McGuinty's two top dogs—the Solicitor General and the Attorney General—have gone hunting and the best they can come home with is a gun amnesty.

I was worried—this took place over at police headquarters just down on Bay Street there—about being able to get out of the building, because I figured as soon as that announcement was made, there would be lineups around the block of gang members, gangsters and drug dealers wanting to surrender their handguns and their automatic firearms. I was worried that the crowds would be so huge that I just wouldn't be able to get out of there.

What has it been, a week and a half now, maybe two? Mark my words, if there had been handguns surrendered, there would have been press conferences with the handguns on display. There would be that big red backdrop, there would be trumpet players, there would be flags flying, there would be fireworks and cheerleaders with white go-go boots and pompoms.

**Mr. Flaherty:** A cheque presentation, maybe.

**Mr. Kormos:** There would be, as Mr. Flaherty says, a cheque presentation at 7. It doesn't matter who or how much. Nobody cares, because you know what the government always does: They always stale-date the cheques; right? You do it six months and a day, and you can't cash the cheque anyway. Think about it. It's like the promise of 1,000 new cops for cash-strapped police services across Ontario. The promise has been made how many times now, Mr. Runciman? I bet you four, maybe five.

**Mr. Runciman:** At least.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kormos:** Mr. Tory says, "Seven." I believe him. That comes to 7,000 new cops, and we've not yet seen one.

Look, understand this: Police services across Ontario are hard-pressed to deliver core services. Do you understand what I'm saying? They're hard-pressed to do the very basic core things. Down in Niagara region—and it's not unlike other police services—when we were visited



by members of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, we were told that in Niagara region, frauds under \$5,000 don't get investigated—not because the cops don't want to; they just don't have the resources. If you make a report for fraud under \$5,000, it goes in a brown file folder and sits and collects dust, because there are no police officers to investigate it. Car theft? Call your insurance agent. It doesn't get investigated. It's true. Hit and runs: hard-pressed for them to get investigated. If there's a fatality, of course the cops are going to go there; let's not be silly. Break and enter? Well, they'll show up, but maybe not right away. And when they do show up it's not going to be like television, you know, with the dusting powder looking for fingerprints and taking the photographs, and the sniffing dogs. It's going to be, "OK, what did they take? It looks like they broke the window; yep, OK. Here is the general occurrence report number"—that's what it's called, a GOR number. "Tell your insurance agent." If he pays the 12 bucks or 15 bucks, they can get it for your insurance claim. Do you understand what I'm saying? Police services, good cops across Ontario, are unable to present and perform even core policing services.

1710

And to those folks who don't live in Toronto and somehow think there's some kind of moat around Toronto, some kind of wall or fence such that the gun violence is going to remain restricted to the city boundaries of Toronto, I say think again. Because if the gangsters and the drug dealers and the hoodlums are armed to the teeth in Toronto, you can bet your boots that they're similarly armed, if not today then in short order, to the same levels in communities, oh, 50 kilometres outside of Toronto, and then 100 and then 150. This is dangerous stuff; it's life-threatening stuff; it's life-taking stuff. People have been dying. Just as people have been shooting on a daily basis, people have been dying on a daily basis. And somehow Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals wanted to create the impression that all is well; oh, there's the occasional pop, crack, of gunfire. Let's not scare off the tourists. There is a crisis in Toronto. If there's a crisis in Toronto, it means there's a crisis in Ontario around the use of illegal handguns by criminals to shoot at and kill other people.

Sometimes little kids—we've read about the little kids, the victims. Again, to those folks who don't live in Toronto, folks like down where I come from in Niagara region, people in Pelham or Thorold or Welland or Port Colborne or Wainfleet, let's not think for a minute that somehow this is a Toronto-specific problem. Let's understand this: If Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals aren't prepared to step up to the plate to respond to what is happening in Toronto, then we have no reason to believe that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are prepared to or have the capacity to or the interest to or the will to or the desire to step up to the plate when it starts happening in other parts of Ontario as well.

You know what's remarkable? You've got a Solicitor General—a wonderful man, Mr. Kwinter is. I have the

highest regard for him. But he's the sponsor of the marijuana grow-op bill. We're going to support the bill, if and when it ever gets called again. But I recall in committee—I'll give credit where credit is due; it was Garfield Dunlop, from the Conservative Party, the Conservative critic, who tried to amend that bill. Because Bob Runciman was there too, and Bob Runciman was tearing a strip off the government, and as a result of Bob Runciman's tirade—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, it was. Garfield Dunlop moved a motion to include crystal meth labs. This is the new scourge of young people—I guess not-so-young people. But it's high-powered methamphetamine that is incredibly addictive and just has an incredible impact on lives.

Did you read in the Star a couple of weeks ago about the crack houses in St. James Town, the apartments that are seized and taken over by crystal meth addicts in some of those buildings, one on each floor, and the neighbours have to live with it? The cops won't go in there. They don't have enough resources. They don't have enough staff. But the government refused to amend its marijuana grow-op bill to contain similar health and safety provisions around houses and other buildings that are used to manufacture this crystal meth, which at the end of day, as anyone can well presume, is far more toxic in the kinds of secondary by-products that are generated when people cook this stuff up.

What gives? You've got an Attorney General who has a fetish for wanting to make sure that there is not a traffic ticket in Toronto that doesn't get prosecuted. It's Bill 14. You've got an Attorney General who is prepared to start to turn the rules of evidence upside down to ensure that nobody beats a traffic ticket, yet you've got backlogs in your criminal courts that result in Askov determinations on a regular basis. So you've got an Attorney General who wants to get tough on traffic tickets but does the Alfred E. Neuman—remember?—"What, me worry?" when it comes to serious crime.

More than a little bit has been said about the trade-offs, the two for one and the three for one, for pretrial custody. I've read the judgments, as has the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, by good judges—I'm not going to criticize the judges—who have felt compelled to do these trade-offs. The reason they felt compelled to do them was because of the conditions under which people are serving their pretrial custody. This government has maintained unconscionable levels of overcrowding such that when it comes to sentencing, courts are trading off sentencing time for pretrial custody time at incredibly high ratios. So you've got people convicted of incredibly dangerous offences walking away without doing any more time, but, more importantly, with a record that says "suspended sentence," and the impression that creates in a subsequent court appearance.

New Democrats support and endorse the call for this government to prevail upon—and let's not try to pretend that these Liberals at Queen's Park are any different from the Liberals in Ottawa. It's the same Liberal Party, the



same logo, the same anthem, the same soirees, the same fundraisers. Let's not pretend that these Liberals at Queen's Park are any different from their Liberal sisters and brothers in Ottawa. But I endorse the call of this resolution for these Liberals. Who would be in a better position than Dalton McGuinty and his Liberals here at Queen's Park to prevail upon the federal Liberals to generate some tougher sentencing laws around gun crimes? It's not even a matter of a phone call; it's just a matter of pulling back the covers and peeking over the pillow. The conversation could be done in the leisure of pillow talk. This government wants to talk a big game about protecting communities and the people in them, and regretably, that's all it is prepared to do: talk about it.

New Democrats endorse the proposition that there has to be a review of the Criminal Code provisions that are applicable to offenders, to criminals, using guns either in their own right or in the course of the commission of other crimes.

1720

Let's face it: All the new laws in the world, all the new sentences in the world mean zip, zero, nada, nothing if you don't have the cops to do the investigations, make the arrests and organize the evidence for the purpose of the prosecutions. All of the police work arresting and collecting evidence and organizing it for the purpose of prosecution means zip, zero, nothing if you have crown attorneys who on a daily basis are compelled to plea bargain away serious charges because they have to clear a docket. Do you know what drives cops crazy? It just drives them right bonkers when they work hard, when they work incredibly hard to do some sophisticated investigative work to collect evidence, to put it all together and package it up so that it can be used by a crown attorney for a prosecution, only to see the charge pleaded away to a lesser offence. Cops do stressful and dangerous work. They shrug and say, "Why should we bother?" They care; nobody else seems to.

You were here, Speaker, when the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police came around. I don't know if they told you what they told me. They told me that there are some days in any number of communities across Ontario when there are more cops sitting in courthouses waiting to give evidence than there are out on the streets patrolling and investigating crimes and catching criminals. Shocking, isn't it?

Again, I don't know whether they told you this, Speaker, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police when they came here a couple of weeks ago, but you have police services that are spending 6%, 7% and 8% of their overall budgets on courtroom security, when the courtrooms are the province's responsibility. What's the matter with these guys? I'm talking about you, the Liberals. You have cash-strapped municipalities that need cash resources to hire police officers, and you're making them spend up to 8% of their police services budgets providing courtroom security in the province's courtrooms, and the province is charged with the responsibility for the administration of justice.

Mr. Zimmer, if I am wrong, just shake your head. Mr. Zimmer nods. He knows I am right. The province, charged with the responsibility of the administration of justice and the operation of the courts, doesn't accept the responsibility of financing courtroom security. Nuts, ain't it, Speaker? Every penny that police services, that police boards and municipalities across Ontario have to spend on courtroom security, which should be paid for by the province of Ontario, because they're their courtrooms, is money that isn't being invested in catching criminals, making our communities safer, putting bad guys in jail and, quite frankly, getting some of those guns off the street.

There was an announcement a week and a half ago. Oh, were there some puffed-up chests when ministers, I think it was the Attorney General and Solicitor General, came back to Queen's Park from wherever it was this announcement was made and talked about—help me with the numbers if I'm wrong—24 new cops in Toronto in the anti-gangs squad. Well, no, I'm afraid it wasn't 24 new cops. You see, they moved 24 police officers from other parts of Toronto. So they gutted police stations across Toronto to move those police officers into the anti-gangs unit. Bizarre isn't it, that they would dare to come back and try to leave the impression, the misimpression—they tried to lead people to believe, creating the misimpression, that the province was responsible for 24 new police officers in the anti-gangs unit, when in fact there wasn't one new police officer in the city of Toronto. They were 24 cops moved from other important roles, leaving those roles unattended to and the streets they used to patrol, unpatrolled.

I want to say to you that there is an opportunity for folks here in Ontario and across the country to let Ottawa know what they think about Ottawa's dismal failure to keep those folks safe in their homes over the course of the next couple of months when there is the inevitable federal election. And I understand. Look, I'm going to vote for a New Democrat in this upcoming federal election. That shouldn't surprise anybody. If you're one of those right-wing types, if you're one of the people who believe in privatizing everything and if you're one of those people who just want to see public health care turned into a two-tier, three-tier, four-tier system—you've seen Stephen Harper on television and you've heard his speeches and you know what he stands for. If that's your cup of tea, who am I to tell you not to vote for the Tories?

The other option, the only other alternative, is to vote for the New Democrats, because, if you vote for the Liberals—just think about it. If you voted for a Liberal in this coming election, you'd only be encouraging them. If you voted Liberal when you got back home, you'd only be encouraging those guys up in Ottawa. Paul Martin would go, "Whew." He'd lean over and say—who would he lean over to? He'd say, "Well, Dosanjh, we've beaten another one, by the skin of our teeth. Whew. You can get those Gomery reports and grey-box them." We have grey boxes down where I come from now. Blue boxes are for



cans; grey boxes are for papers. If you vote Liberal in this coming federal election, you're only encouraging them. How many more millions of dollars have to be taken out of hard-working taxpayers' pockets by the Liberals before we put an end to all this nonsense?

I'm pretty impressed with what Jack Layton has been doing in Ottawa.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, no. I'm darned impressed with what Jack Layton and New Democrats have been doing in Ottawa. I think people are understanding—it certainly has impressed me with the importance of making sure that we've got even more New Democrats in Ottawa to keep them honest. Just like up in Scarborough–Rouge River, where Sheila White is putting up signs left and right—mostly left—and Sheila White is out there knocking on doors talking to folks, Sheila White is working real hard because she knows that the folks in Scarborough–Rouge River want to send a message to Dalton McGuinty. She knows that sitting here with this caucus at Queen's Park is going to be the best message that the folks of Scarborough–Rouge River could ever send to Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals here at Queen's Park. I tell you, Sheila White would not only serve the folks of Scarborough–Rouge River well but she'd serve this Legislature well. What a woman. She is something else, let me tell you. She would be one heck of a legislator, one heck of an MPP. Sheila White would turn heads here at Queen's Park. Sheila White, the NDP candidate in Scarborough–Rouge River, would carry on a legacy of representation there that those folks deserve and, at the same time, let them deliver a message to Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal gang that is more than warranted. Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal gang—a message to them by voting for Sheila White.

1730

It would be a message about the government's inaction when it comes to the plague of shootings over the course of the last months now. Wasn't there a time when we were hoping we could refer to it as that period of weeks during which there were shootings every day? It's now that period of months during which there were shootings a day. With cops still frustrated because they're understaffed and underresourced—they are—with courtrooms still backlogged so that criminals are walking way, with charges being dismissed because of the Askov ruling, with crown attorneys plea-bargaining away serious charges because of those same backloads that this government simply hasn't come to grips with, I want repeat that this government is just hell-bent, it's so passionate, about making sure there isn't a traffic ticket in Toronto that doesn't get prosecuted.

The Attorney General, by gosh, by golly, is going to get tough and make sure traffic tickets don't get withdrawn. He's going to make sure the backlogs in traffic ticket court are addressed. He is going to make sure that those people who park illegally are going to get hit hard. The justice system is going to come down on them like a ton of bricks. He is, with Bill 14: double parking—over. I

can hear the Attorney General now in his leadoff speech on second reading: double parking—vanished. Parking too close to the intersection—gone. Dirty licence plate—no more. Michael Bryant is going to get tough. He is. He's got Bill 14. He's going to clamp down on traffic ticket offences and ensure that none of those charges get thrown out. He's going to get more JPs into provincial offences courts. He's going to clear the backlogs. Michael Bryant, the Attorney General, is going to turn the rules of evidence upside down so that there aren't any scofflaws beating their traffic tickets.

But when it comes to shooting down kids and others in the streets of Toronto, it's The Basketball Diaries. When it comes to the need for more police staffing, cops out there on the street, it's, "We promise another 1,000." When it comes to financing these things, it's another stale-dated cheque that looks good in the photo op but will never clear when it gets to the bank because it was dated six months and one day ago.

We are pleased this resolution was put forward today. We will be supporting this resolution. New Democrats look forward to the chance to participate in meaningful responses to this plague of gun violence, and I look forward to seeing people like Marilyn Churley in Ottawa—

**Mr. Baird:** And?

**Mr. Kormos:** —along with John Baird, dealing with it at the federal level in a way that the federal Liberals simply can't, or won't. Marilyn Churley would sure stir things up in Ottawa, wouldn't she? Can you imagine her with John Baird? Jim Flaherty of course would be the senior, thoughtful, moderate in the context of that trio. He would be the stabilizer.

I'm looking forward to voting for this resolution.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** First of all, it's clear the opposition benches seem to have the federal election on their minds. Clearly, the pre-writ campaign has begun. We wish them well as they desert this particular place.

I'd like to begin with a quotation from a good liberal Democrat, LBJ, Lyndon Baines Johnson, who said, "The ... city should be a collection of communities where every member has a right to belong. It should be a place where every man feels safe on his streets and in the house of his friends. It should be a place where each individual's dignity and self-respect is strengthened by the respect and affection of his neighbours. It should be a place where each of us can find the satisfaction and warmth which comes from being a member of the community of man," which I would encourage other members of this House to join as well. "This is what man sought at the dawn of civilization. It is what we seek today."

To that end, as we've heard from the PC side, they have actually caused, engendered, led to a lot of the difficulties that unfortunately we are facing on the streets of Toronto today. They entered the word "downloading" into the vocabulary, into the discourse of politics in Ontario; for example, a \$181-million cut from the Ministry of Public Safety and Security in the years 2002 to 2003. With reference to offering, for example, the youth of



Ontario and others opportunities to reach their full potential on social services, they cut the operating budget of the Ministry of Community and Social Services by 17%. These are but two small examples whose unfortunate, lingering, negative effects echo still, particularly within my own riding.

Le gouvernement McGuinty est résolu à mettre tout en oeuvre pour débarrasser nos rues des armes à feu et maintenir la sécurité au sein de nos collectivités. Pour combattre la violence armée, il faut intensifier la lutte contre le crime par des mesures rigoureuses d'exécution de la loi et une prévention efficace, tout en ciblant les causes du crime. La pauvreté et le désespoir sont notamment des facteurs de violence par arme à feu. L'Ontario est déterminé à améliorer l'environnement des communautés par des investissements ciblés dans les logements améliorés, la sécurité à l'école et des activités parascolaires, ainsi que des programmes destinés aux jeunes et adultes à risque.

Dans le cadre de stratégie de lutte contre les armes à feu, le gouvernement McGuinty poursuivra sa collaboration avec tous les paliers de gouvernement et les membres de la collectivité afin d'élaborer des changements législatifs et des initiatives communautaires visant à éradiquer la violence par arme à feu.

It's a collective approach, whether it's tough on crime or tough on the causes of crime, tough on the aspects of prosecution, of enforcement, of rounding up gangs, organized crime, those prone to violence, or addressing the social causes of crime. It's an integrated plan. That's why we must not support this particular resolution.

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** I'm proud to add my words of support to the words spoken earlier by the Attorney General. Look, the bottom line is that we're all concerned about the rising gun violence in Toronto and elsewhere in Ontario. The Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services have introduced a comprehensive, multifaceted strategy to combat gangs and guns. Our government is working with the police, the city of Toronto, community services agencies and others to combat this problem. We're doing everything possible to reduce gun crimes and prosecute those responsible. Gun violence is a multifaceted problem. We're being tough on crime; we're being tough on the causes of crime. Success is being achieved.

Just last week, the Attorney General and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services attended the provincial-territorial meeting of justice ministers. We urged the federal government, and indeed the federal government agreed, to increase mandatory sentences for gun crimes, including trafficking and importing of weapons, to create new offences related to guns that are subject to mandatory minimum sentences.

Ontario has also urged a review of the Youth Criminal Justice Act to ensure that the most effective approach can be taken regarding young persons who commit serious crimes involving firearms. These efforts are successful.

A remarkable national consensus has been achieved. The federal government has committed itself to a

legislative package that calls for, among other things, increased mandatory minimum penalties for firearm smuggling, trafficking or importing of firearms, and for the illegal possession of loaded firearms in a public place; extended prohibition order provisions; restrictions on the availability of parole for violent firearm offences; and improved witness testimony and protection programs. The proposals also call for the introduction of two new offences to the Criminal Code: breaking and entering with intent to steal a firearm, and robbery where a firearm is stolen. Those are new offences. Ontario's proposals will lead to tougher gun laws.

**1740**

Ontario and the federal government have agreed to move forward on a team of prosecutors working together here in Toronto to take action on gun and related drug offences. This means federal and provincial prosecutors working together with local police and indeed federal police.

We were pleased to be present last week when the Prime Minister pledged over \$50 million in new funding over five years for a national gun violence and gang prevention fund. The Prime Minister also promised \$1 million in funding for community-based justice initiatives in Toronto, which would include a pre-charge diversion program that would see some of the cases handled outside the traditional justice system. This bold initiative has been welcomed by Mayor Miller and indeed all Torontonians. The federal government agrees with us that Torontonians should not have to endure violent gun crime perpetrated by gangs on the streets.

We're also very pleased with the \$50 million in new federal funding to support community-based prevention and intervention projects targeting guns and these gangs.

Meanwhile, we continue to implement our anti-gun initiatives through expansion of the Toronto guns and gangs task force, the ongoing gun amnesty, the streamlining of the witness protection program, and the expansion of youth justice committees.

In January 2004, soon after the McGuinty government came into office, the Attorney General assigned expert prosecutors to work full-time with the Toronto guns and gangs task force. Toronto police officers and expert crown attorneys are now working together from day one of an investigation through to the conclusion, conviction and sentencing of the accused.

Crown prosecutors never withdraw or plea-bargain firearms-related offences unless there are exceptional circumstances. The crown must also seek appropriate sentences that will act as a deterrent and consider seeking sentences higher than the mandatory minimum.

Last month, the Attorney General and Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services expanded the guns and gangs task force significantly. It's a result of these efforts on behalf of this government that I am very proud of and, for the reasons that I've outlined in these remarks, the efforts that we're putting into this issue of guns and gangs, that I'm happy to speak to this.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?



**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** I suggest you pay close attention to what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, because when I looked at this, I've got to tell you, I was absolutely incensed by some of the falsehoods that I've seen in this particular motion. I do ask you to pay close attention—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I am indeed paying very close attention, and I would ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Duguid:** I certainly will, Mr. Speaker. That's why I did ask you to pay close attention, because it is difficult for me to restrain myself when I look at some of the things in here that are—and I believe it's OK for me to say—not true, because that's a judgment. I say it—

**The Acting Speaker:** If the member is testing my patience, he'll find that it's limited. I would ask him to withdraw that particular unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Duguid:** I indeed withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

But as I look at some of the things in here—a suggestion, for instance, that the Attorney General has not made an effective effort to lobby the federal government to toughen sentences for gun crimes: The Attorney General has been the leader across this country in terms of rallying Attorneys General right across Canada to ensure that we toughen up federal gun laws. So that's completely untrue when I look at that—completely.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm going to warn the member to refrain from further unparliamentary comments.

**Mr. Duguid:** Suggesting for a second that the McGuinty government is responsible for gun-related homicides or that the increase in gun-related homicides is the fault of the McGuinty government—that's an absolute crock, and that's parliamentary, I'm sure.

I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition simply look in the mirror. Look at those caucus members around him. I wouldn't go so far as to say that it's the fault of the former government entirely for some of the problems that we're experiencing, because we all know that gun violence is a very complex issue. But it would be absolutely incorrect to suggest that they weren't at least a very serious contributing factor. Rather than point fingers, as Mr. Tory is doing with this particular motion, he should be apologizing for the previous record of his government. He should be apologizing for closing school gyms and facilities for our young people. That resulted in the destruction of social groups, school groups, Scouts, Guides, and sporting groups that utilized these schools and needed these schools to help keep them off the street. They closed them down.

He should be apologizing for the severe cuts in social programs that impacted high-risk families and children. Many children impacted by his party's brutal cuts to social assistance are now the very young people that are at risk of getting into some of these criminal activities. Yet he tries to blame the current government for the very

problems that his previous government had a very significant role in creating. To that I say, "Shame."

I was at an anti-violence event on the weekend and I watched the Leader of the Opposition speak. He gave a good speech. I give him credit for that. But who was there lobbying me? Somebody with a John Tory button on, lobbying me about anti-gun-control. I've got the petition right here. I'll ask a page to come up and deliver it to the Leader of the Opposition, because maybe he wants to sign the petition as well.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time available for debate on this motion.

Mr. Tory has moved that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government to recognize that under the watch of the McGuinty Liberal government, the province of Ontario has witnessed—

**Mr. Greg Sorbara (Vaughan–King–Aurora):** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1747 to 1757.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Tory has moved opposition day number 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hampton, Howard	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

#### Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Peterson, Tim
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramal, Khalil
Bryant, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Matthews, Deborah	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Sandals, Liz
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	
Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 52.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

## SENTENCING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We will now do the late shows.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Attorney General. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant to the minister may reply for up to five minutes. I recognize the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of occasions—and I am relatively new to the House, in fact the newest member of the House—on which I could have registered dissatisfaction with the answers given by various ministers of the crown, but never, I don't think, was an answer as utterly unresponsive and unrelated to a serious issue raised yesterday as the one given by the Attorney General in respect of the matter in particular of lenient sentencing arrangements and deals entered into by his crown attorneys in respect of the sentencing of people who are convicted as criminals.

You might recall that my question was specifically this: Will he give instructions to his crown attorneys, will he make it possible, will he give such direction as is necessary to stop this practice of the two-for-one, three-for-one and let's-make-a-deal arrangements that are presently routinely and frequently entered into by his crown attorneys in the justice system, that allow people to get three times the credit for time served before their sentence and, I think, in the process make a mockery of the justice system?

He could have stood up and said, "Do you know what? The Leader of the Opposition is absolutely right. This kind of thing makes a mockery of the justice system. It goes against everything that people are telling us in terms of how there have to be fixes made to the justice system to restore confidence in realistic sentencing" and so on. He could have said, "We're just not going to do it any more, and while I can't stop a judge at some point in time from himself or herself ordering such an arrangement, my crowns won't recommend them and my crowns won't agree to them."

What did he do instead? He got up and read us an old page out of some old briefing note about some things they had done here and there that had absolutely nothing to do with the issue of sentencing; an old rehash of old lines somebody else wrote for him. Then he went on to tell me, in a supplementary answer on the same subject, that he would speak slowly so that he could be certain that I would understand him.

Well, I think this makes a mockery of question period and a mockery of the justice system. The real danger that I have in mind, the fear that I have, is that if we leave it

in place, it's going to make a mockery of his own sentencing reforms that he talks about so much in this House and elsewhere.

Of course, we can all see that the results of the efforts in Whitehorse last week are completely non-specific. Mr. Cotler said, "Oh, yes, we buy in. We're going to get tougher on those gun criminals." Mr. Bryant is taking credit for a completely non-specific, non-existent piece of legislation that probably won't be passed, given the federal electoral timetable. But the bottom line is, let's say it was passed—and we should all hope it should be. The bottom line is that if you leave this three-for-one and two-for-one deal-making in place, engaged in by the crown attorneys employed by, responsible to and accountable to the Attorney General of Ontario, you have a situation where almost any sentence that's passed is subject to being negotiated out of by a two-for-one or a three-for-one deal. I don't think the people of Ontario understand that that's what is going on here. You literally have people in court who are sentenced to a lengthy period of incarceration for a crime they have committed, but because they did a three-for-one deal on the time served before their sentencing, they walk out of the courtroom the same day and never go to jail.

What would a taxpayer think if that was televised and they're watching and they hear the judge say, "I sentence you to the minimum time prescribed by law of three years in jail, but I have a note here saying there's an arrangement that you get three-for-one credit for time served, so you can go"? That's why people have no faith in the justice system. That's why there are criminals out there who we know are smart enough to work the system; they have lawyers who are smart enough to work the system.

The reason I filed the notice of dissatisfaction is because I think what the Attorney General should have stood up and said is: "It is my job as the chief law officer of the crown to build, restore and maintain faith in the justice system. That is my job, and so therefore we are going to stop this. We recognize that these two-for-one and three-for-one let's-make-a-deal arrangements are eroding faith in the justice system and so we're going to stop it, and the Leader of the Opposition is right. I'm going to go back to my office and issue a directive to those people, saying that while we can't control what judges do, we're not going to abide by those kinds of agreements. We're not going to suggest them. We're not going to agree to them as the crown, because we know it's wrong."

That is what the minister of justice and Attorney General should have said if he was serious about answering the question and indeed if he was at all serious about doing what he is there to do, which is to uphold and promote confidence in the justice system of Ontario so that people can stop thinking that we're making a mockery of it and can start thinking that the justice system is there to protect them and to make sure that criminals are more afraid of some of the consequences of their actions than the families are afraid of the criminals.



**The Acting Speaker:** The parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, the member for Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** Here is what I hope is a less theatrical answer.

The issue of credit for time spent in pre-trial custody is a matter solely within the discretion of the sentencing judge, based on the unique circumstances of the individual case. Ultimately, crowns do not determine how much credit is given by a judge for time spent by an accused in pre-trial custody.

The crown does not support three-for-one credit as a general policy. Crowns have received strong and clear direction on how to deal with this issue.

The Criminal Code allows judges to consider pre-trial custody in determining an appropriate sentence. Where appropriate, the two-for-one principle has been recognized in the courts and approved by the Ontario Court of Appeal.

The Ontario Court of Appeal recognizes giving enhanced credit for time spent in pre-trial custody when custody is more onerous on an accused than a post-custody sentence would be.

As I've already mentioned, generally the crown does not support three-for-one credit. Crowns have received instruction on how to oppose such requests in appropriate cases. Crowns are also aware that they should be proactive in making efforts to expedite cases where the accused is in custody in order to minimize the so-called "dead time."

Crowns understand that, where appropriate, they should call evidence to rebut defence allegations of onerous conditions in pre-trial custody. They understand the need to ensure that the sentencing judge has accurate information in the form of evidence where the conditions are onerous.

Our Court of Appeal made reference to the potential for this issue to "swallow up the entire sentencing process." Mr. Justice Moldaver made this comment in a case called *R. v. J. B.* That's reported at [2004] O. J. No. 2559, for the benefit of the lawyers here. We agree with Mr. Justice Moldaver's comments in that case.

Let me say something about seeking tougher sentences. We've worked diligently for some time in an effort to ensure that sentences for gun-related offences actually match the crime and act as a deterrent to further gun violence. We're happy that these efforts are proving fruitful. The Prime Minister has committed to increasing mandatory minimum sentences for firearm crimes.

At a recent meeting of justice ministers in the Yukon, tougher gun laws were agreed upon. In the coming weeks, legislation will go before Parliament that will result in a number of improvements, including increased sentences for trafficking or importing firearms and for illegal possession of loaded firearms in a public place.

We're pleased that the federal government has recognized with us the need to change mandatory minimum sentences for certain gun crimes. We need these changes in Ontario. Following Ontario's lead at the recent justice ministers' meeting, there was consensus that mandatory

minimums need to change, and the federal government has agreed to make those changes.

We are not proposing any specific amount for these increases at this point in time. This is because the question of the amount of the sentence is a matter of detail and analysis that should be left to the officials to look at, having regard to various constitutional issues, as well as developing an overall comprehensive framework of mandatory minimum penalties.

We believe that both the current four-year offences and those attracting one-year mandatory minimum penalties should be increased.

**1810**

Let me say something about seeking tougher sentences here in Ontario. In Ontario, our guns and gangs crowns have developed and will continue to supplement a firearms prosecution package, which is now available to all crown prosecutors. This package includes sentence precedents and related material that can be used as a resource in seeking higher sentences. We are implementing new and innovative ways for crowns to bring community impact evidence before the court in seeking these tougher sentences. This involves crown prosecutors developing and presenting evidence to the court about the devastating impact of gun offences. The Ontario Court of Appeal has endorsed this view that exemplary sentences are the only way to deter criminals from carrying handguns. The court's ruling in *Regina versus Danvers* sends a clear message that gun violence will not be tolerated and that the public must be protected.

Let me say something about expanding the guns and gangs task force. In January 2004, we assigned a special team of prosecutors to work with the task force. We expanded that task force by adding 26 experienced police officers and 32 crown attorneys who will work exclusively on the prosecution of these offences.

This government takes this issue seriously. I hope that my remarks have satisfied and have expanded the material before the Leader of the Opposition.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the first of two late shows.

## HYDRO RATES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We will do the second one now.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Kenora-Rainy River has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Energy. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Yes, I asked the minister a specific question yesterday. I asked her if the McGuinty government would order Ontario Power Generation to return the \$181 million that it has taken from the pockets of Ontario industries and Ontario consumers over the last quarter, at a time when paper mills are shutting down, when steel mills are threatened

with shutdown because they can't afford to pay the high price of electricity under the McGuinty government's policy of driving hydroelectricity rates through the roof.

This is the answer that I got. The minister said, "When I was doing my reading, a little bit of homework, this was the government that I think purchased land in Costa Rica for a rain forest." Now, assuming the minister has done the homework and done the reading, you must be able to tell us: When was this so-called rain forest purchased? Where was this rain forest purchased? How many acres, how many hectares were purchased? Can you tell us the price per hectare, the price per acre? Can you tell us the total price, the total cost? Can you tell us exactly how, when, where and through whom this was transacted? If you are going to allude to these situations and assert to the public that they are true, then you must be able to back up your answer. So I am asking you now, since you say you did the homework, since you say you did the reading, can you answer the questions?

**The Acting Speaker:** In response, the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** As a matter of fact, the question really was around the OPG \$181 million. I had answered the question a number of times, but the member didn't like the answer. The answer was that 5% of the investment in fact goes back to OPG and the remaining amount goes to pay the stranded debt.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** That he drove up.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** Well, it's interesting. Actually, that's right. The previous government—under the NDP, in fact, the prices for hydro were raised about 40%.

I think what's really important here is that we're actually taking a far more responsible approach to our baseload generation. And in particular to the question that was asked around Niagara—

**Mr. Hampton:** And about Costa Rica?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than happy to respond if in fact I could have the opportunity to do so.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Kenora–Rainy River to refrain from his interjections so as to allow the Minister of Energy to respond to the question.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** As I recall, the question was around the \$181 million. I did respond; he did not like the answer. The answer remains the same: 5% of the investment goes to OPG; the remainder goes to pay the stranded debt.

Interestingly enough, in OPG we have both regulated and unregulated assets. In OPG, the regulated assets are in Darlington, Pickering, Niagara and Saunders, and in the unregulated we have assets such as the coal-fired generation, Lennox and others. Of the two, we have \$800-and-some-odd million that has been accumulated over the base of 4.7. That revenue ceiling, if there are dollars over the \$847 million, in fact goes back to the consumers—

**Mr. Hampton:** Have you asked about Costa Rica?

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Kenora–Rainy River once again to refrain from heckling the minister, please.

**Mr. Hampton:** With respect, Speaker, I'm still waiting for an answer on the Costa Rica issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** But his heckling is out of order, and he knows it. Again, there are limits to my patience, so I would ask him once again to refrain from heckling the minister.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will continue.

As I said, there are both regulated and unregulated assets. Of the approximately \$840-some-odd million in the unregulated over the 4.7 ceiling, that is returned to all consumers in Ontario. A portion actually goes to homeowners and small businesses, and roughly 15% to 20% goes back to—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Minister of Energy has the floor.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, 15% to 20% of that, roughly, goes back to large industrial consumers. So in fact they do get a rebate.

We have two issues here. One is the \$181 million. A percentage is kept for OPG in terms of their investment, and the remainder goes to the stranded debt. And of the other \$800-and-some-odd million, a portion goes to help small businesses and the regular consumer, and 15% to 20% actually goes to the large industrial consumers.

It is interesting as well: I think that on record we have, from the particular member, that he is opposed to coal. In fact, he actually said that he would close all coal-fired plants by 2007. But then he went ahead and cancelled almost 2,000 megawatts of clean, renewable energy, and in his book, *Public Power*, he said, "Some of our environmental-focused supporters wanted us to start dotting the landscape with windmills, solar houses and so on, but we said no, as this made no economic sense." But, he also said, "We will continue to live with the effects of the coal mistakes for decades to come. Some of us will die before our time, victims of coal-generated air pollution"—*Public Power*, page 109.

So in fact, I have answered the question. The question was around the \$181 million. I believe I have answered that question very satisfactorily. I answered it not once but twice, maybe three or four times yesterday. But the member didn't like the answer and kept on badgering. For me, I would say that I have responded with due diligence and I have provided the necessary information that should, in fact, make the Speaker very pleased.

**Interjection:** What was the cost of Costa Rica?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** The \$181 million was the question, Mr. Speaker.



1820

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE TRANSPORT

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 14, 2005, on the motion for third reading of Bill 169, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to amend and repeal various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters / Projet de loi 169, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et modifiant et abrogeant diverses autres lois à l'égard de questions relatives au transport.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We are now going to do questions and comments in relation to the presentation of the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. Are there any questions and comments? No.

The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I would like to thank the members of all parties who are here tonight to debate the bill—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would remind the Minister of Transportation that you're participating in questions and comments with respect to the speech given a few days ago by the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. Would you wish to make a comment with respect to—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** OK, you have two minutes.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank everybody who participated in this discussion, and I want to put some of the facts about Bill 169 in response to the issues you have raised.

One is about the taxi scooping. The facts are that this is an illegal activity going on in this province, and the safety of the public who come to this province is being heard. What we are trying to do with this scooping bill is to make sure that the licensed taxi drivers can pick up passengers wherever they're licensed to do so, so the safety of the passengers can be protected.

Another thing we're trying to do through this bill is the issue of studded tires. There is research that clearly shows that if studded tires are used in winter, 5%—the lives of people can be saved. That is another aspect of this legislation.

The third point I want to make is about gridlock. Gridlock is costing our economy an incredible amount of money, to the tune of about \$1.8 billion a year. Some of the things we are proposing in this legislation, including the HOV lanes and also to promote public transit, are actually geared to ensure that the congestion issue gets resolved to a certain extent so it is not costing the economy too much money.

I want to say this again: The issue of illegal taxi driving is not an airport issue and it is not a Toronto

issue; it's a provincial issue. It's all about the safety of the public, and that's why we are pushing this bill ahead.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments? The member for Beaches-East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** No, I'm not.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments? The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has two minutes to reply if he chooses to do so.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I'll just say that it's been a great debate. I want to thank Jean-Marc Lalonde and Gilles Bisson for putting in the fire-fighters problem that we had in our area. I certainly appreciate that.

I probably won't have to wear another Toronto Maple Leafs tie again, because Montreal won't lose to them again, I'm sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I stood up somewhat prematurely the last time.

I'd just like to give some of the members of the House a little bit of history, for those members who were not here during the last Parliament. In the last Parliament, there was an identical bill related to the scooping provision put before us in a private member's bill by the then member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. In all respects, that bill was identical to what is contained in the Liberal government bill here today.

When it was put forward, there were many people who were upset with the bill and there were also proponents for the bill. The proponents included the Greater Toronto Airport Authority, which came to my office on the Danforth to lobby me, not once but twice. They came to talk about the benefits of the bill for Toronto international airport, and how the anti-scooping provisions would assist them in looking out for the scoopers. The second group that came to see me was the airport limousine drivers, who as well did not want people coming in to scoop their fares. Now, you have to remember that the then member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale was a Conservative and he was sticking up for the people in his municipality, the people who lived in his municipality, who worked in his municipality and the area around his municipality, which included Pearson airport.

This private member's bill did not succeed in passing, as so many private member's bills do not, in spite of the fact that it had support then from the Conservative Party, that it had support from the Liberal Party, but did not have support from the New Democratic Party. When it was called out on a voice vote, when it was called out on an agreement on whether or not that bill would proceed in the hectic days that usually happen around Christmas or at the end of session, there was no vote; there were no voices raised in opposition to the bill. One of those voices was mine. The reason I opposed it then, and the reason I oppose the provision today, has nothing to do with the fact that people are scooping at the airport. Some people do that. It had nothing to do with the GTAA saying that this was going to be better for them, reduce



their policing costs. That's not the issue either. The issue then and the issue today remain one and the same: The people who drive cabs in Toronto do so under very difficult circumstances. They can pick up fares within the confines of the city of Toronto. If they pick up a fare that wants to go to the airport, they can drive their customer to the airport. But once they get there, there is nothing they can do in return. If they have a pre-arranged, and I mean pre-arranged, pickup, they can pay \$8.50 and go into a lock-up. They sit in that lock-up sometimes for an hour or two hours. When they are called out of the lock-up to come and pick up their fare, sometimes it takes up to half an hour. I want to tell the minister, if he doesn't know this, that a half-hour of waiting for a cab, when there are cabs all over the place—most of those poor men and women who wait and pay \$8.50 end up with no pre-arranged fare. They drive back to Toronto because they can't get back in and say, "I have another one." They lose the \$8.50, they lose the hour and they earn absolutely no money—empty ride. This is what happens.

The converse does not happen to the limousine drivers. The limousine drivers pick up someone at the airport and drive them to their location. They occasionally drive me home, I'm sure they drive the minister home and I'm sure they drive most of the people here home. They then wait downtown, or in whatever location they are, and get a phone call when people want to be picked up to go back to the airport. They sometimes have to wait a few minutes, but they don't pay \$8.50. They don't pay anything at all. If they wait, they go into the coffee shop, have a coffee and wait until it coincides. If they have to wait more than an hour, they go back to the airport and join the line. If they have to wait less than an hour, they have a coffee and go to pick up their new person. They make their living that way.

The people in Toronto feel that this procedure that exists today is unfair. The anti-scooping provision reinforces the unfairness. That's what it does: It reinforces; it makes it even difficult. It makes it so that if one of them makes a mistake, if one of them is frustrated, if one of them is in the line and then their fare isn't there and somebody says, "Can I get in the cab?" on a snowy night and there's nobody around and they say, "Yes. Why not?"—a \$20,000 fine. Do you know what that means to an individual who barely makes minimum wage in Toronto? For most cab drivers, that's basically their life.

I want to tell you that they came and made that position very forcefully to the New Democratic Party, to the Liberals and to the Conservatives. There were Liberals who said no too. There were Conservatives who would not allow it to go through on the government bill. Former Minister Sterling spoke about this last night. This is why the bill was unfair. That's why it remains unfair today. The airport is able, is abundantly able, to look after scoopers. Do I think there are people there? I've been scooped once, or at least attempted once. Somebody will come and say, "If you want to get into my limousine, you have to go up the elevator, four flights of stairs, and you have to walk to the far end to where my car is

parked." Because he's not allowed to be out in front, he's not going to do that. He takes the bag, and you go way up there and that's what happens. Then you drive out as if he's just an ordinary customer. Those are the scoopers. That's who they are. These aren't people who drive up and put a light on the top and say, "Limousine." That isn't what they are. These are guys who usually have a late-model, good-looking car who park in the parking lot. That's what they do, and they shouldn't be doing that. But in order for your bill to pass, you are making it even more, ever more, difficult for ordinary cab drivers in the city of Toronto.

**1830**

What we have here is a very real problem. The Toronto cabbies see how the airport people can come downtown, wait and get a callback. But they also know that every single day they are scooped in this city in enormous numbers. Some of the people who do this exercise at the city of Toronto estimate it to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars a year in lost fares for the cab drivers of Toronto, and those fares go to the limousine drivers of the GTA.

How this happens is really simple, Mr. Minister. The big hotels in downtown Toronto have contracts. When somebody says they're going to the airport, they don't call a cab, they call the limousine company, because they have a contract and an agreement with the limousine companies. That's who they call; that's who they take. So all of the cabbies might as well not line up in front of the hotel for the \$40 fare from the Royal York; they might as well not line up expecting one of those. But the more insidious thing that happens is that at the hotel there is a graft, a thing called cookies. This is where the doorman will tell an American tourist or somebody who is from out of town who wants to go on an extended, long ride, say to Niagara Falls for the day—the guy says, "Can you get me a cab? I'd like to go to Niagara Falls for the day." Well, any cabbie in the world, in Toronto, would like to get that fare, but he doesn't and she doesn't. Who gets the fare is the limousine drivers, because the limousine drivers pay what is called a cookie. It's usually \$20. They slip \$20 to the doorman. The doorman then says, "Excuse me, limousine driver, he's going to the airport." Once everybody is finally inside, they say, "Excuse me, no, that's not it; it's Niagara Falls for the day." The \$20 changes hands and everybody is happy. That's how easy scooping is in Toronto and how difficult it is in Mississauga, at the airport. It is night and day.

Do you want to stop scooping at the airport? Of course you do. Would that you had the same concern for the scoopers who are coming and literally stealing money from the cab drivers of Toronto. These cab drivers suffer from extremely low wages. Some of them make \$50 for an entire shift, after they have paid for their gas and paid the people—\$50 for their entire shift for a day. That's about minimum wage. They have been hit by SARS. They have been hit by the decline in tourism. They have nowhere to turn. They have gone to the council. Toronto city council understands this and has begged you in a



motion not to proceed with this section. The mayor has weighed in. The mayor has sent a letter—and I am sure you have it—in which he says he agrees with the city council. He is simply asking that the Minister of Transportation and opposition critics be advised that he supports council's decision. The people of Toronto support this. The cab drivers have been circling this building on two or three occasions, and they want to be heard.

We are asking you, quite simply: Don't proclaim this provision. I'll vote for the rest of the bill. Please help the city of Toronto cab drivers.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill. I want to begin by associating myself completely with the comments of the member for Beaches–East York.

I had the opportunity many years ago, in the early days of my law practice, to represent at one time or another both groups of taxi drivers and groups of limousine drivers—a long, long time ago. It's funny, because the general issue of scooping was around back then. You make friends among those people, many of whom are still in the business and have been in the business for many years, and you see them when you're using the cabs and the limousines. As the member for Beaches–East York said, we all use these limousines and taxis to get around. You do realize, as he said, how hard they work. You do realize that they get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and that they are dealing with skyrocketing costs of insurance and gasoline. Yeah, they just had a recent fare increase that may help a little bit, but you realize how hard they work. In many cases they have to pay lease payments or rental payments to the taxi owner they are renting the cab from, because a lot of them in effect don't own the plates they operate under.

They have a real problem with the scooping that goes on in the city of Toronto, exactly as the member for Beaches–East York said, where there are the deals he talked about with the hotels. Frankly, even beyond that, there are limousine people who go around in a kind of completely unfettered way, just scooping people right off the street.

What a shame it is that, when you know that—because people have told you in this House; I've read the speeches; I've watched the debates—you couldn't see your way clear to do anything about that and to assist in any way with respect to that, but you could see your way clear to proceed with this, when you've been asked over and over again—in fact, if you go through the record, you were asked in the committee by, I think, members of both of the opposition parties to delay the proclamation of this section pending either the resolution of the City of Toronto Act or the Municipal Act—one or the other, or both. You were asked in a letter that came from the city of Toronto council requesting that you delay the proclamation of this, pending the resolution of either the City of Toronto Act or the Municipal Act. You were asked, as the member for Beaches–East York said, by Mayor Miller, who wrote saying that he endorsed the views of

Toronto city council in respect of delaying the proclamation. As I recall, even the member for Scarborough Centre, one of your own members, indicated that there was, as we all know, a process going on in respect of the Municipal Act, where there were discussions, modifications and reforms taking place. It was a process that was underway.

You have to ask yourself the question: Why would it be that a reasonable request like that, shared by opposition parties here—I can't speak to this, but the member for Beaches–East York indicated that there were Liberal members who shared the view because they care about the livelihood of and fairness for Toronto taxicab drivers—by the mayor of the city of Toronto, and that there is a process underway which would allow for, if you didn't proclaim the section, a sense of fairness to apply here—I think it's even an environmentally friendly thing where you will not have the situation going on, as it has gone on and as it will go on under this law, where people have to go back empty. You will have a level playing field, which I thought we believed in here, that one group shouldn't be favoured over the other. If they want to compete with each other, it's up to them to establish who gets the business. You won't have this business going on that the member for Beaches–East York described very well in detail and I had it described to me 25 years ago, with respect to people having to sit or come back empty, which is environmentally unfriendly and bad for their business, bad for their time. Time is money to these people. Why wouldn't the minister, why wouldn't the McGuinty government create that level playing field? Why wouldn't they allow that level playing field to prevail just by not proclaiming the section of the act pending the City of Toronto Act being resolved—which it apparently will be quite soon; we're told that it's coming into this House quite soon—or the Municipal Act, which is sure to follow shortly thereafter?

Instead, what this minister has done, through absolute refusal even to consider the points of view of the city council of Toronto, the mayor of Toronto, opposition members of this Legislature, members of his own party, the cab industry and the Toronto taxicab drivers, is to decide that you're going to cast them to the four winds. I wonder why that is. Isn't it strange that you'd cast all of those people to the four winds?

I think it is just most unfortunate. I really just wanted to speak so that I could have the opportunity to say that I think this is the kind of thing that I believe breeds disrespect for the political and the parliamentary process, because those people would have every reason to ask why you couldn't agree to delay the proclamation of a section pending the resolution of a matter, whether it's the City of Toronto Act or the Municipal Act, where this could all get itself sorted out, and why, instead, you would cast these people to the four winds and subject them, as the member for Beaches–East York said, to a situation where they could be sitting there—I'm not arguing it's right; if it's against the law, it's not right—on

a snowy night, pick up a fare and be subject to a fine of \$20,000.

That's your idea of fairness: that these guys have to go out there with a fare and can't come back with a fare, whereas the limousine people, who can make deals with the hotels, can pick people up on the street, where it's almost impossible to enforce it—at the airport it's relatively easy to enforce who picks people up and who doesn't. By the way, when the members of this House, on all sides, have said, in respect of the rest of this bill—again, I've seen the debates; I've read the Hansard. You have as broad support for the other provisions of this bill as you could get on any piece of legislation that I've seen in my short time here. The other parties have said that there is just one section they have asked you to delay proclamation of, pending what could be a resolution arrived at somewhere else by another piece or two of legislation presently being prepared by this government.

Instead, you're going to upset the apple cart for the taxi drivers; you're going to create a non-level playing field and put that into legislation; you are going to perpetuate an unfairness on these people, and I just think it is unfortunate. I wonder why that is. It doesn't make any sense to me that, in an instance where you know you would have our support, ours and that of the New Democratic Party, to not proclaim this section for a period of time, that you would have the support of the city council of Toronto, the mayor of Toronto, a number of your own members, the entire Toronto taxicab industry—why would it be that you just won't give any consideration whatsoever to delaying proclamation of this section?

You know best what that answer is. There can't be any rational answer for it or any answer that holds any water here. I think it is unfortunate. You've been prepared to cast these people aside. You've been prepared to reject the most reasonable of requests that have been made on their behalf, simply to delay proclamation of one section of a bill where you have people in this House wanting to support all the other sections of the bill, and on this one you won't even think about it. To me, it is what gives this place a bad name, when reasonable people come forward, supported by lots of other people outside, some of whom are entirely dispassionate people in respect of all this, and the government just says, "No, we drafted the bill. We have our reasons for doing this sort of thing. We're not going to tell you what they are. We're just going to do it. That's our policy, and that's all there is to it."

It's too bad that a piece of legislation that has many good things in it can't have been made that much better by just saying that a section that will be passed as part of the bill, because we know what the result is going to be when we vote in a short period of time, couldn't have been made that much better, that much fairer—to take into account the interests of these people who are struggling to make a living in this city—by delaying proclamation of the bill. I regret that, and it's unfortunate. I think it says a lot, and unfortunately none of it good, about the process here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate? I see the Minister of Transportation in the House and would ask him if he wishes to use two minutes to reply.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I want to thank all the members who participated in the discussion on this bill. This is a democratic process, and in a democratic process discussion takes place and everybody puts forward their point of view. I acknowledge and I respect all the points of view that have been put forward.

I want to thank, first of all, all the members who participated, but I also want to thank all those who participated in the committee delegations as well. As a result of all that, I think this bill is much better, and it improves the safety of all the people on the roads in Ontario.

We are absolutely committed through this bill to improving safety for all the people of Ontario and making sure that the illegal activity in this province stops. I again want to thank each and every one who participated in the discussion and in the delegations.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Takhar has moved third reading of Bill 169. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

It being a quarter to seven, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1843.*



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Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 16 November 2005

Mercredi 16 novembre 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 16 November 2005

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 16 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### WATERLOO-WELLINGTON TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** Our Waterloo–Wellington transportation action plan is comprised of some of the top transportation priorities of our municipalities in Waterloo–Wellington.

Upgrading Highway 6 from Mount Forest to Fergus is a crucial part of that plan. According to the Wellington Advertiser, that part of Highway 6 has recently been nominated as one of the Municipal Roads Coalition's worst roads in Ontario. If the minister ever travelled through my riding, he would find that the condition of this road is deplorable. When will he take action to give final approval to the building of a safer, modern Highway 6?

The action plan also calls for a new four-lane Highway 7 from Kitchener to Guelph. I used that highway on Sunday afternoon, and I continue to hear from constituents who believe that congestion on it makes it a very dangerous route. As the minister stalls and sputters on the immediate need for a new Highway 7, his indecision stifles economic development and represents a huge safety issue for people travelling in and through Waterloo–Wellington.

Another key project of our action plan is the region of Waterloo's light rail transit initiative. I encourage the government to support this to the greatest extent possible. As recently written in a Kitchener-Waterloo Record editorial, "All the evidence points toward the need for better public transit services in the future, particularly in large urban areas, which is what Waterloo region is rapidly becoming."

We are now past the mid-term point of the McGuinty Liberal government. I have been advocating for these transportation projects since the very day after the 2003 election. My constituents have waited long enough for this government—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Members' statements.

### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN WATERLOO REGION

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I'm pleased to rise today and highlight some of the leading-edge

research and innovation taking place both in my riding and throughout Waterloo region. The past few weeks have certainly been exciting and have reaffirmed the role the region plays in the future of the province.

My community boasts a number of outstanding research facilities, including the Centre for International Governance Innovation, or CIGI, as it's known. Since 2001, CIGI has been working to create a Canadian-based research institute of international significance on the issue of international governance.

During the weekend of October 21 to 24, CIGI hosted its first major international conference in Waterloo region. This year's theme was international governance innovation. I was honoured to attend and to introduce the Premier at the gala—he attended it in his role as Minister of Research and Innovation—as well as accompany him on a tour of another outstanding facility in Waterloo region, the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics.

Following the conference, on October 28 the government reaffirmed the value of research in our region by investing over \$6 million for 35 local projects at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. This allocation under the Ontario research fund was part of a \$48-million investment to support 312 projects across Ontario.

Already the newly created Ministry of Research and Innovation has illustrated this government's commitment to strengthening Ontario as a leading economy and society. I believe that Waterloo region serves as a perfect example of how an area's economic advantage and culture of innovation can be fostered by supporting its research infrastructure.

### CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I'm pleased today to recognize World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day. COPD is a disease that affects the lungs, making it difficult to breathe.

COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in Canada, and approximately 15% of all smokers will develop it in their lifetime. It is also a disease that affects particularly women, and COPD kills more women each year than breast cancer. Due to the irreversible nature of tobacco-induced lung damage, COPD is the only common cause of death that continues to rise in North America.

In addition to the human toll, tobacco-related diseases such as COPD cost the Ontario economy more than \$1.7

billion in health care and account for close to one million hospital days each year.

It is important that screening for COPD be encouraged among those with a history of smoking, especially women over the age of 40, as they are particularly vulnerable. Prevention is key to dealing with COPD and it is important to educate people about the harmful effects of tobacco.

Our party takes COPD seriously. We need to continue to invest in order to ensure that Ontario scores well in making sure we prevent COPD.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I rise today to congratulate our government on its recent announcements that deliver on our commitment to publicly funded health care in Ontario.

Only a publicly funded health care system can add six new tests to the newborn screening program. Once the expansion of this program is completed, Ontario will test for 27 rare medical conditions.

Only a publicly funded health care system can expand primary care, especially in communities where individuals face linguistic, geographic or socio-economic barriers.

As part of its recent announcement, our government is supporting several new CHCs, or community health centres, including one in Malvern, and eight new CHC satellite locations in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods identified in the city of Toronto's Strong Neighbourhoods report.

Only a publicly funded health care system can create and support a province-wide wait times information Web site so that Ontarians can know the wait times for specific procedures in their community. This Web site will enable patients and their primary care providers to access potentially faster service if it is available. By the end of next year, a single province-wide information system will be available in about 50 hospitals representing 80% of the total volume of key services.

Unfortunately, these investments and priority programs will not be available if we follow the opposition's plan to cut \$2.4 billion from the health care budget and allow more private sector involvement in the health care system.

Through our government's recent announcements, and those to come in the coming months, we are demonstrating our commitment to publicly funded, publicly owned and publicly controlled health care in Ontario.

### CAMPBELLFORD CHOCOLATE FACTORY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** Last week, the town of Campbellford was hit with the terrible news that its largest employer, the World's Finest Chocolate factory, was closing and moving jobs to the United States.

The shutdown of manufacturing is scheduled for March 31 of next year and will affect 125 full-time employees, many of them single moms. This is a devastating blow to Campbellford and the municipality of Trent Hills, and the provincial government should be moving quickly to provide assistance.

**1340**

As of today, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is nowhere to be seen. The owner of the factory is committed to making every effort to secure a new owner-operator, and the government should be providing all assistance possible to aid that cause.

We know Ontario has lost 42,000 manufacturing jobs over the past year. We don't want the jobs in Campbellford to be just another addition to this alarming statistic. The chocolate factory is a first-rate facility with a trained and dedicated workforce.

Alternatives to closure are out there. I urge the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to get engaged now and help save these jobs.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just to correct the statement—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** You can only correct your own statement.

### PARAMEDIC SERVICES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** First of all, I want to rise today about a situation that's happening up in Hearst and Kapuskasing that I think the Minister of Health and the Premier should know about. We're going to be in the position soon this spring, if nothing changes, of losing paramedic services in the communities of Hearst and Kapuskasing.

Let me explain. We currently have full coverage in both communities. The district service board, the area service board of Cochrane, has been wanting the government to move on this particular initiative of making sure that when ambulances were downloaded to municipalities, 50-cent dollars went with that service to ensure that full services are offered across the district: 50% from the province and 50% from the municipalities, as collected by the DSSAB.

What has happened over a period of time is that that 50-cent dollar is no longer a 50-cent dollar. I understand from talking to Steve Trinier and Dave Landers from the DSSAB that where they're at is that less than 40-cent dollars are now coming from the provincial government as a result of inflation. As costs have increased for ambulance services because of heat, gas, hydro, wages and all that, the DSSABs find themselves paying a larger and larger burden of the cost of delivering ambulance services. As a result of that, the district service board will be meeting tomorrow night to decide the fate of ambulance services in the communities of Hearst and Kapuskasing.

I'm here in this Legislature today to say to the Minister of Health, the Premier, if he were here—I know he's doing important business at this point—and the



Acting Premier that we need to make sure the government stays on course of what they promised in the last election: to make sure that 50-cent dollars are delivered to the DSSABs so that the ambulance service stays in place.

If the decision tomorrow night is in the negative, it would mean that the communities of Hearst and Kapuskasing would lose coverage when it comes to ambulance services, and the citizens of those communities would enjoy much less service than anywhere else. As their local representative, I want—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

### PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** I found it ironic when I read that the official opposition has added to their Web site a meter supposedly marking the money that average Ontarians pay out of pocket for the great services this government provides. The meter includes gas prices, which are not determined by the province. Perhaps snow removal costs will be figured in over the coming months as well.

Why ironic? The main reason this government has had to secure more funds is to manage the incredible debt load it inherited from the opposition when they were in power.

The role of the government is to provide services and sustainability to the people it represents, while ensuring that future considerations are accounted for. The last Tory government managed to eliminate, weaken and download services provided by the government while creating a ballooning deficit that has burdened this province and hampered its ability to plan for the future.

I am proud to be part of a government that, unlike its predecessor, puts the interests of Ontarians first. This means cutting a \$5.6-billion deficit down to just \$1.4 billion, it means reduced wait times in key areas of health care, it means more money for students, and less labour strife. The list goes on.

Every service cut by the Tories has blossomed under the McGuinty Liberals. With this government, Ontarians know that every dollar paid in taxes goes right back to them through improved health care, education and economic opportunities. In fact, I would like to see a meter that tracks quality of life for average Ontarians. I can guarantee that such a meter would show a meteoric rise over the last two years.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On Wednesday of last week, I had the pleasure and honour of attending two affordable housing ground-breaking ceremonies in my riding of Brant: one in the city of Brantford and the other in the town of Paris, inside of Brant. I commend the province and its commitment to get back into the affordable housing business after almost a decade-long hiatus. I would also like to thank the McGuinty govern-

ment for its commitment to provide over \$300 million of affordable housing in this province.

My riding of Brant is reaping the direct benefits from this commitment. In Brantford, the province has committed over \$800,000 in partnership with the federal government to help support a \$7.5-million construction project which will create 27 new affordable housing units, while in Paris, over \$600,000 has been committed to help build 24 apartments in a project worth \$2.4 million.

But more important than the details and the figures of these projects is the government's commitment to people. There are some who simply say that this is not the responsibility of the province, but I would say that it is always our responsibility to assist those in need and to help provide an improved quality of life for every resident of Ontario. This is exactly what these announcements accomplish for those residents of Brant who are in need of this program and affordable housing.

My congratulations are offered to all of the partners: the private partners and the municipal partners, particularly the municipal staff of both Brantford and Brant who came up with these creative ways to provide our citizens with the housing they so desperately need and that has been absent for 10 years.

### CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** I rise today to commemorate World COPD Day: chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder. This is currently the fourth leading cause of death in Canada. As a doctor, I can attest to the fact that this is a devastating lung disease that includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. People with this condition have difficulty performing even simple tasks like walking up stairs, because they struggle for every breath.

Every day in Ontario, 115 people are actually diagnosed with this condition and admitted to hospital. In fact, COPD is ranked the fifth major cause of hospitalization: higher than schizophrenia, diabetes, and lung and throat cancer. Currently, there are an estimated 270,000 diagnosed patients in Ontario, and it's estimated that an equal number remain undiagnosed.

Yet the face of COPD is changing. It is no longer the face only of an elderly man, but also of a middle-aged woman. I'd like to acknowledge patients diagnosed with COPD who very graciously volunteered their time to join us in the gallery today.

Today, the Lung Association is active and has just released a national report card on COPD which still shows, unfortunately, a dismal public awareness of this disease, despite its significant challenges. Further details on this report card will be outlined today at a reception hosted by the Lung Association from 5 to 7 p.m., and I would encourage all of my colleagues to join us, because when you can't breathe, nothing else matters.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Safe Streets Act, 1999 and the Highway Traffic Act to recognize the fund-raising activities of legitimate charities and non-profit organizations / *Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la sécurité dans les rues et le Code de la route pour reconnaître les activités de financement des organismes de bienfaisance légitimes et organismes sans but lucratif*, the title of which is amended to read "An Act to amend the Safe Streets Act, 1999 and the Highway Traffic Act to recognize the fund-raising activities of registered charities / *Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la sécurité dans les rues et le Code de la route pour reconnaître les activités de financement des organismes de bienfaisance enregistrés*."

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

**Ms. Churley:** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table:** Your committee recommends that Bill 137, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide for a tax credit for expenses incurred in using public transit, be not reported.

**The Speaker:** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

**Ms. Churley:** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table:** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 153, An Act in memory of Jay Lawrence and Bart Mackey to amend the Highway Traffic Act / *Projet de loi 153, Loi modifiant le Code de la route à la mémoire de Jay Lawrence et Bart Mackey*.

**The Speaker:** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 16, 2005, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## MOTIONS

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 16, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1352 to 1357.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Baird, John R.  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Colle, Mike  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter

Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Klees, Frank  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John

Parsons, Ernie  
Peters, Steve  
Peterson, Tim  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
Churley, Marilyn  
Hardeman, Ernie

Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario

Martel, Shelley  
Murdoch, Bill  
Prue, Michael

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 60; the nays are 9.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSESCLINICAL SIMULATION EQUIPMENT  
FOR NURSES

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Earlier this morning I had the privi-



age of participating in an announcement at the medical sciences building at the University of Toronto, not far from this Legislature. We announced another important step in the ongoing process we have undertaken to improve the quality of patient care in this province.

Allow me to share this good news with you, Mr. Speaker, and with my colleagues. I was at the University of Toronto, and the honourable member from Toronto-Danforth and the honourable member from Kitchener-Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer, were both there, at the announcement that our government is investing \$10 million in new clinical simulation equipment for Ontario's nursing schools.

As many members of this chamber will recall, there was a time when the province of Ontario was not a great place in which to be a nurse. Our province suffered from a nursing shortage. There was inadequate recruitment and retention of nurses, and those nurses who did work here were forced to endure poor working conditions and a government that treated them with a lack of respect. We're changing that.

This government recognizes that nurses are valuable professionals and a vital part of our health care system. We have set out to fix the problems confronting Ontario's nurses, and we have made significant progress. Today's announcement represents one more part of this effort. And as we make this a better health care system for nurses, we are, of course, making it a better health care system for patients.

The \$10 million we announced today to enable nursing schools to buy clinical simulation equipment builds on last year's investment of \$10 million, bringing the total to \$20 million. This investment will provide nursing students with opportunities for hands-on practice in simulated situations at state-of-the-art facilities throughout the province: clinical simulators designed to replicate the symptoms and behaviour of real patients and to react to treatment just as a real patient would. This sophisticated equipment will enable nursing students to receive training that is unparalleled; training that will, without question, make them more effective when they begin their clinical work.

Last year's \$10-million first wave of investment went to 17 nursing schools. Today, we invested in 12 schools of nursing: at Ryerson University, the Humber Institute of Technology, the University of Windsor, McMaster University, Mohawk College, Sheridan College, Collège Boréal, Cambrian College, St. Lawrence College, Trent University, Brock University and Georgian College.

Each school will receive between \$355,000 and \$1.8 million. A further \$2.9 million will be invested to create clinical centres of excellence in areas including northern nursing education, rural nursing education and aboriginal nursing education.

This investment is one more part of our government's comprehensive nursing strategy, which aims to improve employment opportunities and enhance working conditions for nurses and nursing students throughout this great and vast province.

We have made remarkable progress in other areas as well. We have already created more than 3,000 new nursing jobs. We're working toward a goal of 70% of Ontario nurses working full-time, and we're well on our way to reaching that goal. According to the College of Nurses, we have already advanced from 51% two years ago to 59% in 2005. And we've provided nearly \$100 million to hospitals and long-term-care homes for the purchase of patient and resident lifting equipment, including 11,000 bed lifts last year alone.

I could go on; don't try me. I'm just kidding. My real message is this: We know that nurses are the heart of our health care system, combining experience, knowledge, skill and compassion, and that's how this government will treat them. More nurses mean more patients receiving the care they need, and better trained nurses mean better patient care. We're making the necessary investments to ensure that this is the reality. The winners, of course, are the people of Ontario.

#### MINERAL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I am delighted to rise in the House today to inform members that Ontario's mineral sector is enjoying a boom the likes of which we have not seen since the 1980s, and our status as the world leader in mineral exploration and development is secure.

Three new mines have opened in the last two years, and the ascent of exploration spending to more than \$300 million has made Ontario the leading jurisdiction in Canada and a major player in the world.

In 2004, the value of mining shares trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange was over US\$140 billion, and Ontario's mineral production was valued at \$7.2 billion, almost one third of Canada's mining wealth. Commodity prices are at record highs, and opportunities to grow and prosper abound.

As a result, the industry is looking for sustainable ways to maximize value. For example, Inco Ltd. recently made a bid to purchase Falconbridge in an effort to strengthen its competitive position globally. Clearly, we are watching with interest as this transaction and others in the mining industry unfold.

Our government is keenly aware of this sector's tremendous potential, and we are working with our stakeholders in the mining industry to ensure that Ontario remains a global leader. This includes investing \$15 million over three years to undertake geological mapping to help unlock the mineral potential in parts of the far north. It also includes the work of the Ontario Mineral Industry Cluster Council, which is gathering insights and views of stakeholders and identifying opportunities to enhance competitiveness, innovation and investment in Ontario's mineral sector. Our government is also assisting producers by investing in research into deep mining capabilities which will help extend the life of existing mines.

Gold remains the primary target for exploration in the province, but there is greater diversity of metals being sought, including platinum/palladium and diamonds. Considerable diamond exploration activity is taking place across the province, particularly in the James Bay lowland, Wawa, and Timmins-Kirkland Lake areas.

In fact, I am very pleased to report that there has been great progress in the realization of Ontario's first diamond mine, the Victor mine, located 90 kilometres west of the community of Attawapiskat on the coast of James Bay. De Beers Canada recently announced that they have received environmental approval for the Victor mine and are now in the permitting stage. In addition, the Attawapiskat First Nation, together with De Beers, announced the signing of an impact benefit agreement. De Beers anticipates that when the Victor mine goes into production in 2008, it expects to produce six million carats of diamonds during its lifespan. The diamond mine would employ about 600 people during construction and 375 during production. De Beers also anticipates that during its lifespan, this project could create a \$6.7-billion ripple effect through the provincial economy.

I am sure that I speak for all members in this House when I commend De Beers and the Attawapiskat First Nation for creating a tremendous economic opportunity for the Attawapiskat community and its people based on a relationship of mutual trust. This relationship exemplifies the power of co-operation. It is my sincere hope that other opportunities for aboriginal communities to benefit from mineral development can be realized as well.

The economic benefits of mineral production are taking root throughout the entire province, but particularly in northern Ontario. Our government will continue to work diligently to promote mineral development in Ontario. We will continue promoting the sustainability of the mining sector in Ontario. And we will continue building on our status as a world leader in mineral exploration and development.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Responses?

1410

#### CLINICAL SIMULATION EQUIPMENT FOR NURSES

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I support the initiative undertaken today in order that we can better prepare our nurses for work on the front line. In fact, I'm very pleased that this government continues to build upon the initiatives that we undertook when we set up the nursing task force in 1998 to address the concerns of the nursing profession. At that time, we committed to creating 12,000 new positions, which we did. We committed to investing in education for nurses, which we did. We supported nurse scientists to conduct research, which we did. We created 106 nurse practitioner positions and provided funding for an aggressive retention and recruitment strategy, which we now see is bearing fruit.

However, I do take exception with the commitment that has been made by this government regarding their pledge to hire 8,000 new nurses, because we know that despite the fact that this government continues to indicate that they have now increased the number of new nursing positions to 3,000, that indeed does not coincide with reality. In fact, we learned during the health estimates that many of those positions are part-time and three- to six-month contract positions. Also, in talking to the representatives of the nursing profession, they continue to tell us that the real numbers are closer to 1,000 new positions.

We also know that this government actually set aside \$91 million to fire 757 nurses last year. So on the one hand, they say they are going to hire 8,000 more; on the other hand, they hand out \$91 million in order to fire 757 nurses. I think it's important to keep this in mind. In fact, last month RNAO said that the number of RNs working in Ontario is not even keeping pace with the province's population growth. CIHI's 2004 report, *Workforce Trends of Registered Nurses in Canada*, revealed that Ontario's RN workforce increased by only 1.1% in 2003-04, from 85,000 to 86,000, while the province's population grew by 1.2% over the same period. The reality is that the growth in our workforce is not keeping pace, so this government is not living up to the promises it made to the people of Ontario.

#### MINERAL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to respond to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I remember just a few short years ago when Ontario was rated the number one place in the world to invest in mining, under the PC government.

I had the pleasure of touring the new Falconbridge Nickel Rim mine with our leader, John Tory, last year. There is tremendous investment going on there—over \$400 million in capital investment and \$900 million in benefits—without government handouts, and with tremendous benefits for the south as well, I might add, when you see all the equipment that's going into that mine. I had the pleasure of touring the Copper Cliff Inco mine as well.

I'm very pleased that the new De Beers diamond mine in Attawapiskat is moving along and is going to be a huge benefit to the aboriginal community there. But I cannot help but think that a large part of the reason why that mine has been successful is the past PC government. I'm sure De Beers was taking advantage of the remote mines 10-year tax exemption and the reduced tax rate to encourage mining development in the remotest parts of the province that was put in by the PC government. There's a whole list of other very good initiatives that were put in by our government at the time, like reducing the mining tax rate by 50%, providing a reduction of corporate income tax rates for resource companies—it's too long a list for me to go through the whole of it—and



\$29 million for Operation Treasure Hunt, a geoscience initiative to ensure high-quality geological data availability.

I opened the Lac des Iles North American Palladium mine, north of Thunder Bay, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and I'm unhappy to see, in recent press clippings, that North American Palladium has laid off 60 people because of the energy policies of this government. I also note that the mining industry is concerned with your Bill 11 and the size of buffers around parks and how that will affect mining claims and the mining industry. I hope you'll look at that.

### CLINICAL SIMULATION EQUIPMENT FOR NURSES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Speaking of nurses, the Ontario Nurses' Association president was at Queen's Park this morning to participate in a press conference concerning Ontario health care workers. Linda Haslam-Stroud expressed her serious concerns regarding the situation facing Ontario nurses. She left no doubt in anyone's mind that front-line nurses have not seen any significant improvement in their workplaces under this Liberal government. I want to quote directly from what Ms. Haslam-Stroud said this morning:

"I want to speak today about the impact of not enough nurses on patient care, on the health and safety of nurses who provide that care and on keeping our nurses in the profession.

"Every day nurses in Ontario face difficult conditions in their workplace: too few qualified front-line staff caring for sicker patients, with fewer resources. This is happening in our hospitals, in our nursing homes and in the community....

"We all know that the current government came to power in this province promising to hire 8,000 new nurses.

"While the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has made a series of one-time funding announcements for nurses, and the government says it has hired more nurses, our nurses have not seen any significant improvements on the front lines in our workplaces.

"Neither the patients nor the nurses in nursing homes, emergency rooms, home care and public health units have seen more nurses to help them with excessive workloads.

"The government says it has created more than 3,000 full-time nursing positions. But a closer look reveals that 1,000 of these are three-month temporary contract positions in hospitals.... too few nurses and poor working conditions are burning out our profession and putting quality patient care in jeopardy.

"We as nurses cannot triage or reassess patients in the emergency department in accordance with the standards and more importantly in accordance with our patients' needs.

"We do not have enough staff to appropriately plan our patients' discharges so that they receive the follow-up in the community that they require and deserve.

"Public health nurses are striving each and every day to provide preventive care to the community. This includes our preparation for the upcoming flu pandemic. Our nurses tell me that they are not even able to provide minimal care for mandatory programs in public health, never mind trying to be proactive in assisting with prevention of disease.

"Our long-term-care nurses are left trying to co-ordinate and plan care for over 100 residents at a time....

"Ontario's lack of nurses not only means stressed-out, burned-out nurses, it means that when Ontarians need quality care, it is being compromised.

"In a province like Ontario, it's a disgrace that the nurse-to-patient ratio has fallen to the second lowest in the entire country."

When she was asked at the press conference how many new, full-time nurses she thought had been created by the Liberal government, the president of ONA said the following, and I quote:

"We believe that there's probably less than 1,000 new positions that have been created, and that's not net, because we also have the layoffs taking place in the hospital sector."

I believe the comments that were made by the president today tell the real story of nurses in Ontario, and it's time this government started dealing with those challenges.

### MINERAL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Well, well: The Liberal government is standing up trying to take credit for the Victor mine and De Beers up in Attawapiskat. I've got to say, that's a little bit beyond the pale. If there has been an impact benefit agreement signed between the community of Attawapiskat and De Beers, this government should take no credit. All the credit has to be given to the local community and Chief Mike Carpenter and his band council, along with those who negotiated very painfully over the last five years to come to an IBA.

For the government to stand up in this House today and say, "Oh, look at us. Look what we've done for the community of Attawapiskat in getting a diamond mine," I remind you that the diamonds were there for thousands of years before the Liberals ever became a government. I remind you that the mine was found a long time ago. I remind you that the Conservatives were in power when they started doing some exploration. In fact, New Democrats were there, and here we are today. If any credit is given, it has to be given to Attawapiskat.

To my friend the Minister of Mines, if you want to do something useful, talk to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to provide the funding necessary to provide training dollars for the community of

Attawapiskat to give the local people an opportunity to train for the jobs that will be created at that mine site. As it is now, the danger is that we will start a mine, which is a good thing, but the local community will not benefit to the degree that it should. Finally, what we need is a provincial government that's engaged, that says to the community of Attawapiskat, "We are prepared to put in dollars to do training so that your local citizens can benefit from the jobs of the Victor project."

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## VISITORS

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm very happy to present to the members of this House today some tremendous guests who are here visiting from Italy. We have the mayor of Alcamo, Giacomo Scala; a councillor from that same town, Fabrizio Riolo; and accompanying them from Windsor are Joe Vesco, Isidoro Faraci and Mario Mannina. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** That, of course, is not a point of order, but welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** My question is for the Acting Premier. In principle, do you support the idea that an advertising firm with close ties to the government should receive a \$6.2-million increase in government business in one year?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I would look forward to perhaps a little more information coming from the honourable member in his supplementary.

**Mr. Runciman:** I thought I provided a pretty clear question. But in any event, the year you came to office, the company that created your Liberal "I won't raise your taxes" ads during the last election campaign did \$99,900 worth of work for your government. According to the public accounts you tabled this year, that very same Liberal-friendly advertising firm won contracts totalling an incredible \$6,319,000 during your first full year in office. That's an increase of over \$6.2 million to a firm whose chief creative officer has publicly fawned over one Dalton McGuinty. Acting Premier, what is your explanation for a Liberal-friendly advertising firm getting a \$6.2-million increase in Liberal government business in just one year?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** The Minister of Government Services will respond to that.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I make the assumption that all the rules were followed here. I make the assumption that we have a

process in place where advertising agencies are selected to be on what's called the vendor-of-record list. It is a transparent process that evaluates them on the basis of objective analysis, and advertising agencies are then required to compete for the business. I just make the assumption that this agency competed fairly and equitably and was selected on the basis of merit. That is exactly what I think the public would expect, and that's exactly what I suspect took place here. If you have any evidence to the contrary, I'd certainly like to hear it.

**Mr. Runciman:** Assumptions can be dangerous. Let me see now: A Liberal-friendly advertising firm gets large Liberal government contracts. Now, where have we heard that before?

To the minister: You can immediately dispel the very bad impression this \$6.3-million contract to a Liberal-friendly firm leaves, especially in the post-Gomery era. Will you now agree to respect hard-earned tax dollars, as you promised during the campaign, and immediately release all tenders received for the advertising business, release all records associated with the \$6.3 million of work that was done by this Liberal-friendly ad firm, and release all detailed contracts won by this firm since the public accounts were tabled? Will you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Again, although I'm not sure which firm he's referring to, I gather that the firm has been on the vendor-of-record list for some considerable period of time, under the previous government and under our government. It's an agency that, I gather, earned the right to be on that vendor-of-record list. There is a process in place that ensures there is a fair and equitable selection of these agencies. This agency, I gather, followed that, and I'm sure the member would not want to imply anything other than that. As I say, this is an agency that was on the same list that you had before. It went through a process for selection that was fair and transparent, and the facts will show that. I think this agency has earned the right to do this business.

### REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. On May 26 of this year, almost six months ago, the opposition submitted a freedom-of-information request for your schedule from January 1, 2004, forward. It has now been six months and that request has yet to be fulfilled. Minister, as you know, under the freedom of information act, those are to be processed within 30 days. You said at committee that you had nothing to hide. If this is so, why six months of delay in releasing something as simple as your personal schedule?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I'm sure they followed the process to request the freedom-of-information request. That request didn't come to me. A minister is not supposed to interfere in a freedom-of-information request, so I haven't done it. They should keep following the process and they will get the information they need.



**Mr. Hudak:** Minister, unfortunately that is not the only example of some kind of obstruction at the Ministry of Transportation. On June 15 of this year we submitted another FOI request for a copy of your cellphone bills and telephone bills belonging to you and your ministerial staff. This letter also included a request for e-mails from the minister's office to the Chalmers Group or its affiliated companies. The Chalmers Group is of course your company, which is supposedly held in a blind trust. It is now five months later, Minister. We have not yet received the response to our simple requests.

Minister, we ask you to dislodge whatever obstruction is taking place and ask you to very kindly facilitate this request and respond immediately.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I can answer this question, even though they asked before. If they have followed the proper process to request further information, they should follow the same process to follow up if they haven't received the information. I cannot interfere. I do not interfere in these affairs so I have no information on it.

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, the usual process of the Minister of Transportation appears to be stonewalling. There is an unfortunate pattern that is developing in here. As you know, Minister, you've been under investigation by the Integrity Commissioner for some five months. Your own Premier has publicly admonished you for serious lapses in judgment. There is an unfortunate coincidence regarding a \$200,000 fundraiser with limousine drivers and subsequent legislation brought before the assembly to benefit the same.

Minister, I ask that you begin to clear the air and the cloud surrounding your conduct. Will you end the obstruction immediately and kindly release those FOIs that are five months and six months overdue?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Big talk about integrity in this Legislature from Conservatives, who have members running for the federal party who are actually showing signs but are still being paid by the Ontario taxpayers. That's the question they are raising here? I have said I have never, ever raised—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I have never interfered in anything. They have requested their request and they should continue to do that.

1430

## SCHOOL SAFETY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Acting Premier: Students, parents and teachers want to know when we're going to see a real plan for school safety from the McGuinty government. Two years ago, your own Human Rights Commissioner called on the McGuinty government to fully fund alternative programs for all suspended and expelled students, instead of throwing those kids on to the streets where they really get into trouble. He called on you to restore youth outreach workers and guidance counsellors fired from Toronto schools, because they are the most effective at rooting

out and preventing bullying. Two years later, the McGuinty government has done nothing. Acting Premier, when are we going to see some real action from the McGuinty government against bullying in our schools?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I'm very happy to have the opportunity to remind the honourable member—perhaps he was not made aware that the minister, this very morning, has launched our government's bullying prevention program. This is the first time—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Yes, he has. This is the first time in the history of the province that the government will be responsible for establishing a province-wide program, working with school boards, to identify the causes of bullying and how bullying can be prevented in our schools. I believe that the minister has been acting very responsibly. He is working with school boards to identify what the issues are and how they can be mitigated so that the incidences of bullying are reduced in our schools.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Something the NDP did not do.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Hampton:** Your so-called plan this morning amounts to \$1,500 a high school. That's it. You can't even buy a pop machine for \$1,500.

Here's the reality: The Human Rights Commissioner called on you to do something two years ago. Since then, you've dithered, you've delayed on changes to the so-called Safe Schools Act and you've dithered and delayed on an anti-bullying plan. For two years, parents have waited for a comprehensive plan, one that gives principals the resources and tools to identify and work with problem kids and one which would allow them to put the outreach workers and the guidance counsellors back into the schools where they can do some good preventive work.

I say again: Don't tell us about \$1,500 per high school. When are we going to see a real plan? When are we going to see the outreach workers and the guidance counsellors back in the high schools where they can do the job?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I'm happy that I have this opportunity to correct the information that's been presented by the honourable member, because in fact the announcement today represents a \$23-million investment to reduce the rate of bullying and to change attitudes around bullying. It includes \$1 million to the Kids Help Phone line. We're expanding that service to a 24-hour service across the province. We are establishing a provincial registry of bullying prevention programs so that schools can learn best practices from each other. There will be up to \$2,000 available to every school for staff training and resources to create an in-house safe school team. In addition to that, there is a \$1-million grant made available for high-challenged schools with additional challenges. Those are the accurate dollars that

are being made available with the minister's announcement today to prevent bullying in our schools.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, you neglected to point out that it's \$23-million spread over three years, which works out to about \$7 million a year. Divide by the number of high schools and this won't even replace the pop machine. That's the McGuinty government's plan. You've had two years. Two years ago the Human Rights Commissioner said there was a serious problem here. Two years ago, the Human Rights Commissioner identified many of the elements that needed to be put in place to address it.

What do we get today? Fifteen hundred dollars per high school. That won't even hire one week's worth of contract work, never mind the outreach workers and the guidance counsellors who are supposed to be there to do the effective job.

Minister, it may have been a photo op today, but it's not a plan. When are we going to see the plan? When are we going to see the resources? When are we going to see the outreach—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Minister?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** It most definitely is a plan, and in my previous response I identified the various areas where we are prepared to invest and support local schools for bullying prevention programs.

I would also remind the honourable member that this government has directed an additional \$355 million to school boards to assist them in the hiring of specialized teachers, which would include guidance counsellors.

Finally, I would like to remind the honourable member that when I was a school board trustee and you were the government, you cut funds to schools and we had to make cuts in the very areas that today you are saying are so important. I suggest that the honourable member might just reflect on his own record, look at what we're doing and recognize that there are going to be some additional resources to prevent bullying in our schools.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. On Monday I asked you to order Ontario Power Generation to roll out a rebate to hard-pressed electricity consumers and businesses. In response to my question, you stated that there was no room to rebate the summer bonus bucks that OPG pocketed over this record-breaking summer. Minister, is that still your position today?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I thank the member for the question yet again. Of the \$181 million, 5% is the investment income retained at Ontario Power Generation Inc., and the remainder goes to pay down the stranded debt. Over and above that, OPG has both regulated and unregulated assets. On the unregulated assets, any dollars that are made over 4.7 cents as a revenue ceiling go back to the consumers in Ontario. Consumers such as small businesses and homeowners

receive a portion, and 15% to 20% of the \$847 million is rebated to the industrial sector.

**Mr. Hampton:** We've had a chance to go through the regulations again, and once again you're confused on the facts. Ontario Power Generation receives significant revenues from unregulated assets like coal generation and natural gas generation solely because of the summer's record-breaking heat and record-breaking electricity prices. These are summer bonus bucks that the McGuinty government can use to provide relief for ordinary families, businesses and industries that are getting hammered on their hydro bills. Will you order OPG to roll out a rebate and return the summer bonus bucks to the people and the industries that need it?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** I will state again: On the unregulated assets, anything above the 4.7-cent-a-kilowatt threshold will be rebated to the consumers. Currently, that's estimated at over \$800 million, and 15% to 20% of that portion goes to large industrial consumers. The rest goes back to small businesses and regular consumers.

**Mr. Hampton:** Here's the reality, Minister: Ordinary people in communities like Dryden, in my constituency, could use those summer bonus bucks that the McGuinty government is pocketing and do a lot more with them. Since the McGuinty government came to office and implemented your policy of driving electricity rates through the roof, the community of Dryden has lost 420 forestry jobs, including 40 announced this week at Weyerhaeuser's pulp and paper mill. The people in Dryden and the people like them paying the price for your hydro rate hikes across Ontario could use those summer bonus bucks that OPG collected in order to put people back to work, in order to save pretty important industries.

1440

The fact of the matter is, there's a whole lot of money that OPG collected this summer that could be returned to industries, to businesses and consumers. The only thing stopping them is that the McGuinty government doesn't have the political will or desire to do it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** To the member, maybe I could just use this quote: "Industrial energy price subsidization can be attractive in theory, but tricky in practice.... I think it far better to work with industry to lower its energy costs through greater efficiency, not through a scheme of subsidized rates." Public Power, page 251.

## SCHOOL BOARDS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Here is what the Minister of Education admitted yesterday in estimates committee: that he authorized the transfer of \$80 million to school boards for which his ministry issued no guidelines of accountability; that those funds will be paid out to teacher unions and the unions for school boards support workers; and that those unions would make payments to their members



through a process that is left totally up to them. He also admitted that he had no control over the qualifying or approval process for those payments. Finally, he admitted there was only one reason for that \$80-million payment, and that was to entice teacher and support worker unions to sign four-year contracts.

Were you and your cabinet colleagues aware that there was no accountability for that \$80 million, and will you today commit that there will be a full accounting for every one of those tax dollars spent?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I would remind the honourable member that when transfers from the province of Ontario are made to school boards, they are disbursed by school boards. School boards are subject to audits that are published in newspapers. So I would suggest that school boards are very accountable for how they spend their money. To suggest that dollars are transferred and there's no accounting for it would not be accurate, in my opinion.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm going to ask the Acting Premier to read Hansard of yesterday's estimates committee, because she's wrong. The fact of the matter is, the minister admitted that not only do school boards not know, because it's strictly the unions who will have control over this money; he also confirmed that if they don't transfer all the money to their members, they get to keep the balance and spend it as they will. For \$80 million, not one new textbook; not one new position for an autistic child; not one new service in the education field.

Minister, will you commit today to an external audit of that 80 million of taxpayers' dollars that effectively has become a slush fund in the school boards of this province? Will you make that commitment to an external audit of the \$80 million?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Again, it's very unfortunate that the pattern of the opposition is to continue to bash teachers. There would appear to be no trust in the expertise of the professionals that we have in our schools who have given so generously of themselves. They've spent their own money on supplies. They certainly did that under your government. What I am prepared to say to the honourable member is that the funds that have been transferred to school boards will be audited.

## NURSES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Health. This morning, you visited a school of nursing and held a photo op with some dummies. Now, according to the Canadian Press, the Ontario Nurses' Association, after watching this performance, suggested, "You are the dummy." They say that instead of holding photo ops with dummies, you should keep your promise to hire more nurses. In fact, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, Linda Haslam-Stroud, says, "The nurses on the front line have not seen any significant improvements in our workplace life." Minister, when is the McGuinty government going to hire the 8,000 new nurses you promised?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** In a place where you can't say "rascal," I'll be careful about how I respond to the honourable member. I do want to say that a note was passed to me in the Legislature that Linda Haslam-Stroud, the president of ONA, with whom I have a good working relationship and meet very regularly, called my office to indicate that the CP story is an erroneous one.

On the issue of our investment in clinical simulation equipment, I think it's very disheartening that a nursing union, the Ontario Federation of Labour, would seek to criticize one element of an investment in overall nursing strategy for their own purposes. It's obvious the clinical simulation equipment is a very good idea as it relates to enhancing the quality of the education process for our nursing students, who will soon be on the front lines delivering important care to Ontarians.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, the nurses want to know about new nurses.

Imagine this situation, Minister: You're hit by a car. You rush to the emergency room. Your leg is broken. You're bleeding. You need help. The admitting clerk at the ER says, "You have a choice: a nurse or one of George Smitherman's dummies." I don't know about you, Minister, but I pick the nurse.

Linda Haslam-Stroud, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, says that "less than 1,000 new (nursing) positions ... have been created, and that's not net, because we also have the layoffs taking place in the hospital sector." So I ask the question again: When is the McGuinty government going to keep its promise to hire the 8,000 new additional nurses?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** With your five-year record in government, which included the overall net loss of thousands of registered nurses in this province, you, sir, are a bit of a piece of work, as has been well identified in the estimates process. From correspondence from my ministry to the health critic of that honourable member's party, he knows and she knows that through our investments in long-term care, home care, public health, community-based mental health and hospitals, we have created and funded more than 3,052 new nursing positions in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock. I just want to remind members that we need to be careful with our language. In both the supplementary and the response, we were getting very close to the edge. So as we go forward, let's remember that this is a place where all members deserve respect.

1450

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. In May of this year, you announced ReNew Ontario, a five-year, \$30-billion plan for infrastructure investment. ReNew Ontario is a welcome and ambitious plan. It does not merely focus on the present, but realizes the importance of planning for the future of the province.



With that in mind, ReNew Ontario takes a strategic approach to planning for the growth of the province and ensuring that the government is concentrating its investments in areas Ontarians have said are their priorities, namely, health care, education and economic prosperity. This government clearly understands that investing in health is a particular priority for Ontarians, and has major investments in health care totalling over \$5 billion over the next five years.

Minister, can you please give us the details of these announcements and how this will help better the lives and health care for the people of Hamilton West and the province as a whole?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** I want to thank the member from Hamilton West for the question. By the year 2010, Ontario and its partners will invest more than \$5 billion to modernize health care facilities, to reduce wait times, to provide better services in high-growth areas and to modernize our older hospitals. This investment plan is the single largest expansion of public hospitals in well over a generation.

Recently, two weeks ago, I was in Hamilton where we announced—the members were there—over \$400 million worth of expansion and redevelopment projects for St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and Hamilton Health Sciences centre.

By providing the infrastructure Ontarians need, our government is determined to ensure that the people of Ontario receive the best and the most modern health care services they want and deserve.

**Ms. Marsales:** May I first and foremost say thank you on behalf of Hamilton West. Ontarians in my riding will be pleased to know that this government is determined to increase the level of accessibility to health care, and has a plan for doing so.

Some of my constituents have also been inquiring as to the details of how the projects will be funded. Funding is always a major concern for many of the taxpayers of Ontario, and they would like to know their tax dollars are providing them with the best possible solution at the most efficient price. It is my understanding that, combined with the traditional style of financing, there will also be some hospital infrastructure that will be built through alternative financing and procurement.

To assist the constituents in Hamilton West and the people of Ontario, can you please help them understand how the province will use this innovative financing tool to help provide more public hospitals and other infrastructure investments in Ontario?

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Not only that, Speaker, but an excellent question, because our government is adopting a new, made-in-Ontario approach to infrastructure financing. It's called alternative finance procurement. We are determined to find and attract new sources of financing for Ontario's public infrastructure, to manage it in a fair, transparent and accountable manner in support of community growth and economic expansion.

Private sector financing is not just about additional investment in public services; it's about leveraging private sector investors' discipline and expertise to ensure projects are delivered on time and on budget. AFP strategies, unlike the previous government's models, do not involve privatization of public assets. Talk of privatization, in fact, would be misleading. No matter who builds or finances public infrastructure in Ontario, our government has made it clear that hospitals and schools will be publicly owned, publicly controlled and at all times publicly accountable.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I note the Minister of Education isn't here, so I'll direct the question to the Acting Premier. Minister, about two years ago, your government announced a moratorium on school closures in Ontario until 2004. At that time you said, "Short-term financial considerations have played too large a role in decisions to close schools. In fact, some of the most successful schools in the province in terms of literacy and numeracy testing results have closed."

Ontario does indeed have many outstanding rural schools where students not only learn and have a great opportunity for education, but also learn the value of being part of a small community. In my riding, the parents and friends of Hampton Junior Public School are working to keep their local school open. They point to many advantages and the results of the EQAO tests. Minister, what steps are you prepared to take to ensure that no viable school is closed on your watch?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I must say that I would like to remind the honourable member that from 1996 to 2003, Ontario boards were forced to close 503 schools. That's an average of 64 schools a year. I would say to the honourable member that the record of this government and our commitment and investment to protect small and rural schools has been significant. Also, with respect to our investments around good schools—

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Oh, it's the bad schools we're closing.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** It was the honourable member who brought into the question the results of EQAO tests, so I'm simply making our commitment to keeping good schools open at \$50 million—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Supplementary?

**Mr. O'Toole:** Minister, it's you who promised not to close rural schools, and small communities, as you know, are dependent on that. Your Good Places to Learn funding is dividing my community and potentially affecting the quality programs in three local schools that I'm speaking about. Enniskillen, Hampton Junior Public School and M.J. Hobbs offer excellent programs today.

Minister, this is really the question: This community and the board are asking you or members of staff to meet with them to resolve the problem of the best use of this



Good Places to Learn funding of \$421,000 and give the boards the respect and flexibility they need to make the decisions, not the handcuffs you've put around the grant. Will you commit today to ensure that you communicate with not just the board but the community on the allocation of the Good Places to Learn grant, how it affects the quality of education—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Our government is very committed to working with school boards. I think we have clearly demonstrated our respect for the locally elected representatives who manage the school systems across Ontario. We have committed \$4 billion to help school boards across the province repair schools that had been neglected by the previous government, in addition to all the other resources that have been made available, particularly in rural communities, for small schools so that those community hubs can continue to be viable within those communities. I would suggest that the honourable member look at the record, look at our commitment and look at the investment of this government in protecting education right across the province. Large schools, small schools, rural schools, schools in your community: we are prepared to work with boards to ensure that good schools continue to be viable.

#### EATING DISORDERS

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is to the Minister of Health. On October 24, Joanne Curran wrote to you on behalf of advocacy organizations which deal with eating disorders. She raised serious concerns regarding the three- to five-month waiting list for assessments at eating disorder programs, deficits facing the programs, the closure of the entire outpatient program and parts of the day treatment program at Toronto General Hospital, and the long waiting list for specialized residential care. She urged money for the ministry-funded programs so that they can at least operate at year 2000 service levels and money for in-patient services to treat the most medically compromised patients.

Minister, when will your government provide funding to deal with these serious gaps in services for those who suffer from eating disorders?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The answer is, quite shortly. I had an opportunity in the same time frame to meet with that organization. What we're seeking to do at the end of each year is take a look at what expenses we made with respect to out-of-country coverage and use all those dollars as reinvestments in our own Ontario system. We gave an indication to them at that meeting—in fact, I asked them for some advice about the best way to proceed in terms of that reinvestment.

I'm operating by memory here. I could undertake later on in the day to give the honourable member a better time frame in terms of when we're going to be able to move forward, but "very shortly" is the language that is most operable at the moment.

1500

**Ms. Martel:** What is most alarming about the whole situation is the huge increase in the number of patients being sent from Ontario out of country because they can't get the treatment here.

Sheena's Place in Toronto got information from your ministry that showed that the number of patients who were treated in the US rose from five in 2000-01 to 51 in 2004-05. The cost over the same period to send patients to the US went from \$503,000 to \$5.6 million. Most alarming was that 21 of the 51 patients who were sent to the US for treatment in 2004-05 had already been treated in the US in 2003-04.

Minister, we spent \$5.6 million to treat eating-disorder patients outside of the country last year. Will you invest that money, and more, to make sure that our young people can get the treatment they need here at home?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's always interesting in this place when people stick with their supplementary that was written, even when they got information in the answer.

I think I demonstrated by memory that I'm pretty aware of the circumstances. We're interested in being able to provide more of this service in the province. In some cases, we have service capacity that's easier to ignite, to enhance. In some cases, it does require specific training. As an example, we're working very hard to create more capacity in Ontario for gastric bypass surgery, which is another example of an area where we've been sending a lot of people out of jurisdiction. But it will take us a little bit of time working with health care organizations to enhance our capacity to do so.

I think the honourable member will be pleased that we're proceeding in a fashion which is that at the end of each year we take a look at what out-of-country dollars we've made and seek to make those appropriate investments to enhance our capacities here in Ontario.

#### FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** My question is for the Minister of Labour, the Honourable Steve Peters. We know that looking after the interests of families is a priority of this government. A case in point: Last year, this government enacted a very important initiative designated to assist working families caring for their dying family members. The family medical leave entitlement allows workers to take up to eight weeks of job-protected leave to provide care or support to a gravely ill family member. Minister, can you tell us what your ministry has done to raise awareness of this important option now available to Ontarians during a time of crisis?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I want to thank the honourable member for his question, because certainly looking after the interests of families in this province is a priority for us in this government. The people of Ontario are our most precious resource. As well, we want to make sure our citizens understand that

they need to be there in times of family crisis, and it's vital that all Ontarians and all MPPs in this House promote the family medical leave.

Certainly, we have tried to do our part to make citizens aware. We've advertised in 21 different languages to make sure that that information gets out. We've printed brochures in English and French and in 10 other languages as well. The family medical leave will give families that peace of mind to know that their job is protected while they cope with tough times during a family crisis. It's essential that all Ontarians know this right.

We are a compassionate government. I think we want to demonstrate that. We want to make sure that everyone in this House and across this province is aware of this compassionate initiative.

**Mr. Peterson:** Minister, thank you for your answer. This valuable option now leaves workers one less thing to worry about during very difficult times. We can understand the emotional, physical and often financial toll of caring for a gravely ill family member. Knowing that one's job is protected allows a caregiver to focus on what's important during times of great emotional stress. It's evident that this government understands the importance of caring for the emotional as well as the physical health of its citizens. Minister, can you tell this House more about the family medical leave awareness campaign, and was it a success?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** We need to make sure that we're continually promoting this. I would ask that every MPP in this House—it was supported in a non-partisan manner—continue to promote this.

Every Ontarian covered under the Employment Standards Act in this province is eligible for family medical leave. Our government wants to make sure that everyone is aware of that right. We recognize that the direct cost of absenteeism to high levels of caregiver stress costs over 1 billion dollars a year in Canada, and the investment that is being made to this is minimal compared to the rewards that are gained by this. We want to make sure that that message gets out. I reiterate, that's why we have brochures available in 10 languages, plus English and French. We've made sure those brochures have been sent out to doctors' offices and to medical facilities across this province, and I would ask that all MPPs in this House, if they have not already received this material, to please get in touch with our office and do their part in spreading the message on this most important government initiative.

#### CORN PRODUCERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** To the Minister of Agriculture: The Canadian International Trade Tribunal has indicated that the subsidization and dumping of US corn has caused injury to our domestic industry. You knew a decision was coming. You know the possible impacts. I raised this with you five weeks ago. Two questions: Where do you stand on the possibility of tariffs on US corn? Secondly, what action steps

have you taken with all sectors involved to find solutions?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I think it's a very important issue. As the member has indicated, there was a ruling announcement yesterday. This is part of a process that is underway that has been initiated by the corn producers, by the grains and oilseeds—actually, Canadian corn producers—and it's something we have been paying very close attention to, but as you would appreciate, because it is a quasi-judicial process, it's not anything this government can become involved in directly.

With respect to your comments around tariffs, our government has very serious concerns around tariffs. At the plowing match that was held in Listowel, the Premier took the opportunity to meet with representatives from the agricultural community for over an hour and made it very clear that our government is going to push the federal government to deal with the tariff issues, very strongly, at the World Trade Organization talks in Hong Kong.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Supplementary question.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** Minister, with due respect, what we don't need is a narrative on process; we need leadership from the provincial government on this important cause.

I recently wrote to Premier McGuinty on this topic. As you well know, farmers have been hit hard by low commodity prices, problems at the border and unfair trade practices from competing jurisdictions. We are in a very unfortunate situation: that the lack of an effective support plan in Ontario for our corn producers puts them in a very difficult situation, and then countervailing duties may result in the closure of Casco, including Casco in Port Colborne, a major provider. Minister, we need immediate leadership. Will you develop an effective support plan to ensure that our corn producers prosper and to keep plants like Casco viable?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Our government has been demonstrating leadership on this file, and if you had gone to meet with the grains and oilseeds folks who were in this building yesterday, you would have heard them report that this government and this ministry have been talking with them. We have made it very clear. We are prepared to work with them on a plan. They have identified the need to work with the federal government as well. I have given them my commitment that I'm very prepared to go with them to the federal government to develop a plan that's going to assist them to deal with these issues for both the short term and the long term. That's the leadership of this government.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** Last year, more than 95,000 patients went to Scarborough hospitals' emergency rooms, but the Scarborough Health Coalition says their hospitals can't keep up. They say



their community is suffering, and I want to quote them here, "from an acute shortage of anaesthesiologists, neurologists, respirologists, operating room assistants and hospital-based pediatricians." Minister, Scarborough's hospital patients are being underserved because of these shortages of health care providers. Can you tell me when Scarborough is going to receive the health care providers, the health care workers, that the people in that community need and deserve?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The short answer is: with a few more years of progress to make up for the efforts your party made while in office, which was to create this crisis of a shortage of doctors that we have. Because the sad reality is, for an honourable member who suffers from a poor memory, that it was the party that he was part of, the government that he was part of, that reduced the size of medical schools in the province of Ontario. The party that preceded us in office left that in place.

1510

I'm pleased to say that we've opened a Northern Ontario Medical School and that we have enhanced the number of medical spots; that's ongoing at other places. In addition, we have made billions of dollars of investments in health care. Scarborough hospitals have received additional new money each and every year that our party has been the government. This will continue, as we have also delivered on the long-asked-for predictable, stable, multi-year funding.

There is more work to be done in Ontario, but we are making progress, making up for the time that was squandered while these parties were in office.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to remind the minister that the McGuinty government is now into its third year, and doctors aren't the only ones missing from Scarborough's health care system. The Ontario Federation of Labour released their report today, and their report says that all health care workers in Ontario are exhausted, understaffed, and under pressure. And to quote them, "Right now, workers in emergency services, hospitals, nursing homes, homes for the aged, retirement homes, public health units, mental health and home care can't," in many cases, "deliver quality care. There are just not enough of them left to do it." They are calling for an immediate moratorium on layoffs in hospitals. Will you do that, Minister? Will you ensure that there are no more layoffs in Ontario's hospitals?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'm in the circumstance of reminding the honourable member of the fact that in Ontario we have community-based governance of our local hospitals. In fact, the vast majority of those who provide health care in the province of Ontario, as distinct from most other provinces, are under community-based governance. I can confirm for the honourable member that there has been significant new employment in all reaches of the health care sector. That includes the acute care hospital sector.

But accordingly, in a system that is \$33 billion large, there will be from time to time changes, alterations in

program and plan, that affect some health care providers. The honourable member's seizing of an interest in the status quo is interesting, especially given the record that his party played while in office.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Thank God we have a good economy, George.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** They, and especially the member from Trinity-Spadina, like to deny the role that they have played historically, but the reality is that while they were in office, they closed thousands of hospital beds, they fired thousands of nurses, and they shut down medical schools. That is their legacy, Mr. Speaker. We're working double time to make up for their squandering of it.

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. As you know, November marks the beginning of deer hunting season, and I would like to thank you for extending the season. But recently in my riding of Huron-Bruce, there have been numerous reports of collisions, vehicles that have been hitting deer on all of our roads. Minister, what have you done to address the rising nuisance deer population?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I'd like to thank the member for her concern about this. As she would know, in her riding, deer-vehicle collisions are a serious threat to human life, as they are right across this province.

Number one, we've worked in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation to get better signage and better lighting on highways where there are heavy deer populations. We're working with MTO also on fencing of main corridors where deer are crossing highways and creating a hazard. As the member has mentioned, we've also increased the harvesting opportunities for hunters in Ontario. In some wildlife management units, theoretically now it is possible to harvest up to seven deer in areas of high population.

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Thank you, Minister. While we're on the topic of nuisance wildlife, I know you have heard the recent reports about bears attacking people, some of which have ended in very tragic results. Moreover, I'm very certain you are aware that there have been an increasing number of sightings of bear in southern Ontario, specifically in some of the more densely populated areas. What actions are being taken to control incidents like these?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I must say I'm very proud of our government's initiative last year, the bear wise program. It has been a great success. We have a 24/7 toll-free call centre that received, last year, 14,500 calls, with our trained staff responding to over 9,000 of those calls. I think, very importantly, we've established protocol now with police forces right across this province, both the OPP and municipal police forces in bear country. We've also hired 50 technical staff to deal with this and support

the police in the high season for nuisance bear activity. We basically have 40 agreements with municipalities with regard to this. I think it's proper to note that we've got \$900,000 invested in more than 165 projects involving prevention, education and awareness in the bear wise program to make sure that people understand how we can coexist with the bears.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Last week or the week before I brought you a problem. The Ministry of the Environment had sent an order to the wrong people, to West Grey, when it should have gone to your ministry. At that point you said you didn't know anything about it, that you would look into it immediately. That was over a week ago. I would just ask you today to tell the House what you looked into and when you are going to fix this river that is full of fish.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I'd like to refer that question to the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of the Environment.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** I thank the member for the question and his concern. The last time we spoke about the situation in Neustadt, we talked about the fact that the Ministry of the Environment had issued a legally binding provincial order to the community to show us what steps they were taking to ensure that the sewage lagoon would not fail. As members will recall, there is a study that was paid for by our ministry that showed, last year, that within five years there was a risk of that lagoon failing. We were very clear about the need to do that. I can report that, subsequent to that, the Ministry of the Environment has stayed that provincial order so that we have an opportunity for our ministry, and those who are concerned about this issue, particularly the municipality, to come together and try to find a resolution. I know it is important for all of us that this situation not be allowed to continue. I know that when the member who asked the question was the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Murdoch:** Do you think we could get a minister who's responsible to answer this question? I'll go back to the Minister of Natural Resources, who I understand is involved in rivers. If you're not doing that any more, maybe you could tell us in this House. There are fish in this river. There are peoples' lives that may be at stake if this lagoon goes into this river. It is your river; it is your river that is moving closer to the lagoons. I would like an answer from the Minister of Natural Resources, who sits in this House. I would hope you didn't mislead this House, but you said you would—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Let's just choose different words.

**Mr. Murdoch:** I hope you wouldn't tell something in the House that isn't true, then. All I'm asking—

**The Speaker:** I need you to withdraw, and then we can go on.

**Mr. Murdoch:** OK, I'll withdraw that and try this a better way then. The minister last week told us that he would immediately get someone to look at this problem and get back to us. That was over a week ago. Maybe the Minister of Municipal Affairs would like to get involved, but that's OK. But the minister did say that you would get back to us—that was over a week ago—and that you would do something immediately. So I'm asking the minister to answer this question. He doesn't need to shove it on to somebody else.

**The Speaker:** I think the question has been asked. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I did it that very day. In fact, I prepared a letter, and that will be delivered to you today.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Wow, what action. That was good.

My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last week, constituency week, I had an opportunity to meet with Jessica Bordeleau, a young woman in Moonbeam, Ontario, who is both developmentally and physically challenged. She is a young woman who, past her school years, is now going to a sheltered workshop. As a result of the funding envelope that that agency has, she is now able to go only on a half-time basis where she used to be full-time. The reason for that is there aren't enough dollars in the budget to allow the personal care worker to give full-time services.

My question to you is simply this: Do you undertake today in this House to review this particular case in order to see if there is money within the budget of the Ministry of Community and Social Services to increase the dollars to that agency so she can get full-time services?

1520

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question. I would like a little bit more information. There was a question in this House just a couple of weeks ago about an agency. I don't know if it's the same agency; it may be a different one. That kind of detail would be good to have if we're going to investigate, so I would like some information. We have had issues, of course, as this member knows, certainly in this area. The result of that has been a significant increase in funding.

From the sound of it, it's the area of the program where we've enhanced funding for people who age after 21, who are finished school and are in the community. We're doing our very best for each stage of life for people with developmental disabilities. I'm very happy to look at details of this particular case so that we'll know. It may well be the same agency that we spoke of a couple of weeks ago.



**Mr. Bisson:** It's not the same agency. It was the Association for Community Living on respite care two weeks ago in Timmins. This is the Association for Community Living, Kapuskasing. What I'm being told by both agencies is that the money that you talk about, which is new money that's supposed to go to enhance services or at least preserve services we've got, is not getting to them. What I'm being told is that the only money that they've got is the 1.5% that they got as part of their core funding increase. None of the other money has reached these agencies. What they're telling me is that they're now in a position where they're having to ration services to the people they give services to because they don't have the money to deal with the increased need.

So in this particular case, the Kapuskasing Access Better Living, this is a young woman in Moonbeam who needs to get out of the house on a full-time basis at this sheltered workshop. What the agency needs is another full-time-equivalent personal care worker. So my question is, are you prepared today to review this case, in order to give that agency the dollars they need to provide the services?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I think that this member knows that we've never refused to look at cases. We hope that we do extremely well with the limited funding that we have. I'm very happy to see this as well. I can tell this member, who has watched the investments we've made very carefully, that we have done so much in the last couple of years—nearing \$200 million of investment, and we are going to families for more funding for special services at home, for the Passport to Community Living for those who are over age 21; yes, to agencies as well, with the 1.5% increase to their base budgets. We have done as much as we possibly can. We always hope to do more. We also hope that this member will give us additional information for this particular case that he asks about.

## PETITIONS

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Culture recently announced that there would be funding cuts totalling more than \$1.2 million from Ontario public library services; and

"Whereas over 69 million people visited public libraries in Ontario in 2003, with more than 100 million items circulating; and

"Whereas these cuts will impact you as a library user, resulting in delays in how often your library receives new books;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture restore the cuts to funding for Ontario public library services so that our

library can continue to promote literacy in our community."

I want to thank the Collingwood Public Library for sending that petition to me. I support it, and I've signed it.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

"Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professional and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

"Whereas Ontario, its businesses, its people and its institutions badly need the professional, managerial and technical skills that many newcomers to Canada have and want to use;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario's professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry, or re-entry, of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce."

I also affix my signature on this petition.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent upon the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to

address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I have also signed this.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a petition from the people of Canada to the federal and provincial governments of Canada on the reduction of gasoline taxes.

“Whereas the steep price of gasoline is seriously affecting the cost of living of the average Canadian and may soon have negative impacts on our provincial and national economies; and

“Whereas the taxes collected by both the provincial and federal governments average 39% of the retail price per litre and are rapidly accruing as the price of gasoline mounts; and

“Whereas these taxes collected on a litre of gasoline are being compounded through the GST being collected, not only in proportion to the base price of gasoline, but also on the PST and the federal excise tax; and

“Whereas the citizens of Canada believe that their government should be limited to the amount of taxes collected at both levels of government when gasoline was, on an average, 80 cents per litre;

“Be it resolved that the citizens of Canada demand that their national and provincial governments immediately roll back all taxes on gasoline to a rate commensurate with an average retail price of 80 cents per litre and no further taxes be added to the price of gasoline for an indefinite period until such time as the populace is broadly consulted on this issue.”

#### CASINO WINDSOR

**Mr. John O’Toole (Durham):** It’s my pleasure to introduce a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

“Whereas the province of Ontario has announced plans to spend \$400 million on renovating the Windsor casino; and

“Whereas we believe health care, education and agriculture are among the many areas that have a higher priority than gambling; and

“Whereas the \$400-million casino expenditure announced by the”—Dalton McGuinty—“government on February 15, 2005, is enough money to hire 3,600 full-time nurses or 1,480 full-time doctors for two years or eliminate the projected deficit Ontario hospitals are facing this year;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, urge the McGuinty government not to gamble with the health of Ontario citizens. And we further urge the McGuinty government to postpone the spending of \$400 million on the Windsor casino and to invest this amount in the real priorities of

Ontario’s citizens, such as a healthy, vibrant and prosperous Ontario.”

I’m pleased to support this on behalf of my constituents and present it to my page, Alex, who’s going to take it to the table for approval.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I’m pleased to join my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls, in this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet) and there are other forms of macular degeneration (dry) that are not covered,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I affix my signature to this, and ask page Andrew to carry it for me.

1530

#### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** This petition is entitled “Farmers Feed Cities Day”:

“Whereas the 60,000 farmers in Ontario are the foundation for 10.3% of provincial economic activity; and

“Whereas many citizens do not appreciate the role Ontario farmers play in putting food on their table; and

“Whereas the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is only 0.7% of the Ontario budget, despite Dalton McGuinty’s promise to make OMAF a ‘lead ministry’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Declare the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving Day as ‘Farmers Feed Cities Day.’”

I support this initiative and affix my signature.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and



"Whereas quality supports are dependent upon the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

This petition is signed by a number of residents from Merlin, Chatham and Blenheim, and I too have signed the petition.

### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the price of gas is reaching unacceptably high levels; and

"Whereas the provincial government, which collects 14.7 cents per litre gas tax, and the federal government, which collects 10 cents per litre gas tax, have done nothing to protect consumers from high gas prices; and

"Whereas, since 1995, the federal government has imposed a deficit elimination tax, that being in the amount of 1.5 cents per litre, that cost taxpayers \$700 million this year; and

"Whereas the federal government imposes 7% GST on the full price of gas, including all taxes, which is an extra tax on tax that cost taxpayers \$500 million this year;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Prime Minister Paul Martin to remove these extra \$1.2 billion in federal gas taxes."

I'm pleased to affix my signature, and I hand this petition to page Cara.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

"Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professionals and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

"Whereas Ontario, its businesses, its people and its institutions badly need the professional, managerial and

technical skills that many newcomers to Canada have and want to use;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario's professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry, or re-entry, of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce."

I affix my name to this petition. I'm going to be giving it to Alexandre, our page.

### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

As you know, the act to preserve the Banting homestead will be debated tomorrow morning during private members'. I've signed this petition, and I agree with it.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition, which is a shared petition, actually, with the member from Mississauga East and the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. The petition read as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

"Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professional and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

"Whereas Ontario, its businesses, its people and its institutions badly need the professional, managerial and technical skills that many newcomers to Canada have and want to use;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario's professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry, or re-entry, of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce."

I agree with the contents of this petition. I will sign it and hand it to page Adam, who is here beside me today.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

"Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

"Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are also countless school-age children that are not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

"Whereas this situation has an impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

"Whereas, as stated on the Web site for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 'IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all preschool children awaiting services. We also petition the Legislature of Ontario to fund an education program in the form of ABA in the school system."

I affix my signature to this.

1540

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the business of the House for this evening.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Is there unanimous consent? Carried.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'm relieved, Speaker, because I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or the order of the House earlier today, the House continue to meet beyond 6 of the clock for the purpose of completing consideration of the motion for second reading of Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement, following which the Speaker shall adjourn the House until Thursday, November 17, 2005, at 10:00 a.m.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Caplan has moved—and I'd better read it—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense? OK. All those in favour? Carried.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### DUFFINS ROUGE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA RÉSERVE AGRICOLE DE DUFFINS-ROUGE

Mr. Ramsay moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve / Projet de loi 16, Loi concernant la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I'm very pleased to move second reading of Bill 16, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act. I'd like to notify the desk that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Sault Ste. Marie.

I'm very proud that this government is acting on its plan to conserve Ontario's prime agricultural land and to ensure that our communities are strong and healthy for generations to come. If passed, this legislation would ensure that lands in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve are set aside permanently for agricultural use.

When I introduced this bill, I briefly sketched the history of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, and today I'd like to review that history in a little more detail. The Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve includes about 4,700 acres of prime agricultural lands in North Pickering. These lands are part of the larger area, close to 40,000 acres, that was expropriated in the 1970s for a



proposed airport. The preserved lands are high-quality farmlands. They have been recognized as prime agricultural areas and lands that qualify for restriction to agricultural or farm-related uses under the region of Durham official plan, the provincial policy statement, the Greenbelt Act and the greenbelt plan.

In 1999, the province, the regional municipality of Durham and the former town of Pickering, now the city of Pickering, agreed to measures that would enable the sale of land within the town of Pickering. The land to be sold was previously expropriated preserve land west of West Duffins Creek. With the agreement of Durham and Pickering, the province sold the land to the original landowners or tenant farmers. As a condition of the sale, the purchasers of the land had to agree to an easement under the Conservation Land Act that would protect the land for agricultural use in perpetuity.

Conservation easements are agreements that are placed on the title to a property that restrict certain uses or activities on lands. If the property is sold, the conservation easement is carried over to the new owner. The conservation easements are an important tool for ensuring that natural heritage features on agricultural lands and private property can be protected over the long term—and I emphasize to the House: over the long term.

As part of the agreement with Durham region and the province, the town of Pickering was assigned the easements on the Duffins-Rouge properties. The easements were established to protect the lands in perpetuity. As I've said before, as far as I'm concerned, "perpetuity" means forever. In fact, the price of the lands sold was based on the value of the lands maintained for agricultural purposes. The province would not have sold these lands at farmland prices unless it intended them to be retained as farmlands.

The easements on the Duffins-Rouge lands were held by the city of Pickering for six years. But in March of this year, without consulting the province, the city of Pickering removed the conservation easements from the titles of two thirds of the property sold by the province in the agricultural preserve. In April 2005, the province sent a letter from Gerry Phillips, then the Chair of Management Board, to the city of Pickering. The letter expressed concern about the city's actions. A letter was also sent to the regional municipality of Durham in May. These letters made the province's position very clear. They outlined Ontario's expectation that the city of Pickering and the region of Durham would honour their commitments to preserve the area for agriculture.

In July 2005, Minister Caplan and myself wrote another letter that asked the city council of Pickering to live up to its agreement with the Ontario Realty Corp. Pickering's response was that it could not reinstate the easements. This response does nothing to ensure the long-term protection of these important agricultural lands, protection the city had agreed to. Instead, the city of Pickering has put the protection of the Duffins-Rouge lands at risk. Many of the properties that Ontario originally sold to local farmers have in fact now been sold to land developers.

I'm pleased to say that the last two provincial governments both recognized the importance of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. They recognized that conserving prime agricultural land is vital if we want to ensure that Ontario farmers can continue to grow the foods we need. As a result, although these farmlands were expropriated in the early 1970s, they have continued to be used for agriculture over the past 30 years. We must ensure these lands remain agricultural in perpetuity. This legislation will provide the long-term protection these lands deserve.

This government is committed to protecting Ontario's natural heritage, preserving green space, planning intelligently for growth and contributing to a cleaner, healthier, natural environment for the people of Ontario. We have acted on this commitment. In April 2004, I was very proud to announce the transfer of more than 1,400 hectares of provincial lands for the expansion of the Rouge Park. With that transfer of land, Rouge Park became the largest natural park in an urban area in North America. Fifty square kilometres in area, home to hundreds of plant species, some of them rare, important habitat for birds and other wildlife and an area rich in historic and culture significance—all of this right on the doorstep of millions of Ontarians.

My ministry remains committed to continuing its strong support and contribution to the Rouge Park as a key partner in the Rouge Park Alliance, a voluntary partnership of governments and organizations that have worked together to create and expand Rouge Park.

Earlier this year, this government fulfilled its commitment to create a permanent and sustainable legacy for Ontarians by protecting a greenbelt in the Golden Horseshoe, with the Rouge Park as a key component. By newly protecting one million acres of green space and farmland now, for a total of 1.8 million acres, we have ensured that future generations will have natural areas to enjoy close to urban and suburban centres.

As part of our commitment, the government specifically named the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve as an important new area to be protected under the greenbelt legislation. I'm pleased to say this government fulfilled its commitment and the task force's recommendation earlier this year when the Duffins-Rouge agricultural lands were included with other agricultural lands in the greenbelt.

We are determined to ensure that the Duffins-Rouge lands are protected. This bill would ensure that the lands in Pickering are part of the legacy of green space and farmland that we are conserving for generations to come.

Pickering's removal of the easements on the Duffins-Rouge lands has broader implications for the conservation community. Many members of that community are very disturbed by these events. The fact that Pickering committed to holding these easements on the Duffins-Rouge land titles and then unilaterally dropped them has shaken the foundations of conservation easements as a long-term tool for protecting lands.



The abandonment of the easements has undermined the efforts of land trusts that were reaching out to landowners. Land trusts have been promoting conservation easements as permanent protection for the duration of an easement. Pickering's actions have put into question the legal integrity and long-term validity of conservation easements.

This government believes that easements must remain a valid tool for conservation. When we committed to creating a greenbelt, we proposed using a wide array of creative solutions to protect lands from development. These included tax credits, land trusts, new park designations and conservation easements. The greenbelt task force also recommended that, to ensure agricultural viability, the province promote the use of conservation easements on agricultural lands.

That's why Bill 16 would specifically amend the Conservation Land Act to make agricultural lands eligible for protection through conservation easements. These amendments would also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Natural Resources to ensure that the processes for amending or releasing easements are transparent and accountable. This legislation would ensure that conservation easements remain an effective and legitimate tool to protect the public's long-term interests in conserving natural areas and agricultural lands. In other words, if passed, this bill would be an important step forward in strengthening conservation easements in general.

1550

All the parties in this Legislature have recognized that Ontario must protect lands with conservation values. In fact, a little over a year ago, the member from Halton made a motion to establish a permanent land acquisition program to ensure the continued acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands. I am pleased to say that in August, Premier McGuinty announced the natural spaces program. This program supports the efforts of private landowners to preserve and restore natural areas on their property. As part of the program, the Ministry of Natural Resources made a \$6-million grant to the Ontario heritage trust, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, to acquire and permanently secure significant natural heritage properties across southern Ontario. I am proud that through the natural spaces program and other government initiatives, we are improving the quality of our air and water, protecting natural areas that are home to a diverse range of native plants and animals, and keeping Ontario green and beautiful.

But acquiring natural heritage properties is only one of many ways to protect the conservation value of lands. In fact, the natural spaces program includes other measures to support private landowners. For example, working with the Ministry of Natural Resources, a stakeholder group will develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach to identifying, restoring and conserving a natural heritage system across southern Ontario. This group will also support private landowners and organizations in coordinating and carrying out land stewardship activity across the south of this province.

When it comes to private land stewardship, Ontario already has a very strong tradition of citizen involvement. For decades, community-based stewardship groups and individual landowners have cleaned up streams, planted trees, stocked fish, organized bird surveys and restored habitat. An important tool for landowners and organizations seeking to protect lands worthy of conservation is property easements for conservation purposes. In fact, in his annual report this year, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario stated that he believed that property easements for conservation purposes could be utilized more broadly.

Bill 16, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005, would amend the Conservation Land Act to strengthen and clarify the use of conservation easements to conserve natural heritage and agricultural lands. In other words, this bill will support the broader use of easements and is consistent with the comments of the Environmental Commissioner.

This bill to protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve supports the government's plan to preserve green space and plan intelligently for growth. We want to leave our children a legacy of protected green space, agricultural land, environmental lands and recreation and resource lands in the Golden Horseshoe area. And we need to preserve our watersheds, rivers and forests to protect the water we drink and the air we breathe.

This government has already taken a number of important steps toward these goals. The Greenbelt Act is in place, and we are on the way to implementing the greenbelt plan to permanently protect 1.8 million acres of green space and agricultural lands. We have strengthened the provincial policy statement by setting clear ground rules for how Ontario communities will grow and prosper. We have developed a greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan and the proposed central Pickering development plan. We've put in place Ontario's biodiversity strategy. In August, Premier McGuinty announced the natural spaces program. On Monday, I had the pleasure of joining the Nature Conservancy of Canada in launching the Great Lakes conservation blueprint for biodiversity.

In conclusion, I want to say that the legislation I have introduced today is another important step toward ensuring healthy growth in southern Ontario and leaving our children a legacy of protected agricultural lands and green space.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Further debate?

**Interjection:** There's more—

**The Acting Speaker:** Sorry; excuse me. I didn't realize it's being shared. The member from Sault Ste. Marie.

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to support our government's position, and the Minister of Natural Resources, on second reading of Bill 16, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005. If passed, Bill 16 would ensure the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve is set



aside permanently for agricultural use. It would also ensure that all existing conservation easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve are held in perpetuity. It would also reinstate easements previously held and released by the city of Pickering. Also, the proposed amendments to the Conservation Land Act, if passed, would provide greater certainty about using conservation easements to provide long-term protection for natural features and agricultural land on private property.

You have heard the history of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, and the minister has clearly articulated that our government is committed to protecting this land for agricultural uses. We know that there are no second chances when it comes to protecting agricultural land and green space. That is why we must take the steps necessary to protect this land today. This bill is just one of the steps this government has taken to conserve green space, agricultural lands, environmental lands and recreation and resource lands in Ontario to ensure our communities are strong and healthy for generations to come. We passed the Greenbelt Act in February 2005, setting aside 1.8 million acres of environmentally sensitive lands and prime agricultural areas around the Golden Horseshoe—legislation Ontarians have embraced. We have made a choice to ensure we do not pave over large tracts of land, by striking a balance between protecting our green spaces and meeting the needs of growing communities.

This bill is in the same spirit as our overall government direction, one that seeks to conserve and protect our valuable natural resources while being mindful of our economic pressures. We have strengthened the provincial policy statement by setting clear ground rules for how Ontario communities will grow and prosper. We have developed a greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan and proposed a central Pickering development plan. We have put in place Ontario's biodiversity strategy. In August, Premier McGuinty and Minister Ramsay announced the natural spaces program. We have introduced new, comprehensive legislation that would strengthen the protection and preservation of Ontario's provincial parks and conservation reserves. In partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, we have launched the Great Lakes conservation blueprint for biodiversity.

All these initiatives, like the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005, are vital steps toward a healthy environment, quality of life and making sure Ontario is a place to be now and in the future. For example, Ontario's biodiversity strategy is intended to conserve our natural heritage and to ensure that the province's natural resources are used sustainably for all Ontarians to benefit from. Biodiversity is the variety of life at all levels. In other words, biodiversity includes every living thing and all the processes through which living things interact. We depend on biodiversity for our very survival. Natural processes clean the air we breathe, purify the water we drink and stabilize our climate. The diversity of natural life also provides enormous economic

and community benefits. Where would we be without our forestry, farming, fishing and outdoor recreation?

But we face a Catch-22: The human activity that depends on biodiversity also threatens biodiversity. Our rapidly growing population in Ontario and around the globe is contributing to the equally rapid decline of biodiversity throughout the world. We are losing the habitat that animals, birds, fish and people need to survive. More species are at risk; alarm bells are going off around the world. That is why it is so important to conserve and restore Ontario's biodiversity. Ontario's biodiversity strategy will help guide and coordinate the efforts of Ontarians who care about conserving our natural heritage, from the smallest insect to the tallest tree, and ensure that the province's natural resources are used in a sustainable way, for everyone's benefit.

It's not just an Ontario government strategy. Developing the strategy was a group effort, and implementing it will also be a group effort. The strategy sets out six strategic directions and 37 actions that will help us work together. Some of the priorities are: making Ontarians aware of the importance of biodiversity, implementing the greenbelt in the Golden Horseshoe, and promoting private land stewardship. We want to encourage more citizens to become directly involved in conserving and restoring biodiversity across Ontario.

#### 1600

Just on that note, I had the privilege on May 24, 2005, to participate with John Cary, the president of Trees Ontario, on a 10-acre piece of property near Sault Ste. Marie. Two individuals, Sue Barber and Aubrey Falls, had agreed to participate in a program that would see 21,000 trees planted on this piece of property. I want to commend these two individuals for stepping forward and being part of a program that will benefit people in our region and throughout the province. This is the type of program on which we need to work more closely with private landowners to ensure this is fostered.

Many people and organizations are already working to protect biodiversity in this province, and the Ontario Biodiversity Council is leading and coordinating the implementation of the strategy. The council is made up of representatives of the partner organizations that worked together to develop the strategy. We will achieve our goals to conserve biodiversity if all citizens and all sectors of society engage in protecting what sustains us. Ontario's biodiversity strategy is a fresh starting point to launch us on working together to protect our national heritage for ourselves today and for the generations that will follow us tomorrow.

Similarly, Ontario's natural spaces program is intended to help conserve and protect Ontario's rich natural heritage: our wetlands, woodlands, savannahs, tall grass prairies, Carolinian forests and even old-growth stands of trees. The program fulfills one of the commitments in Ontario's biodiversity strategy. We have an obligation to protect and preserve our natural heritage, just as previous generations did for us. Natural spaces is a program to help preserve and protect natural spaces across southern



Ontario by engaging property owners in taking care of the land and conserving our natural areas. With most of southern Ontario's land privately owned, we can't do it without their help.

The program includes a \$2-million grant to the Trees Ontario Foundation to support increased reforestation, and tax incentive programs for owners of managed forests and conservation lands. It also includes a \$6-million grant to the Ontario Heritage Trust for acquiring and securing significant natural heritage properties.

Through the program, we are increasing our partnerships with key environmental organizations. An alliance of organizations is working with MNR to help develop the tools and incentives and the on-ground activities that will make the program a success.

As well as taking action to help private landowners conserve their lands, our government has introduced new legislation for parks and protected areas. The last time the Provincial Parks Act was reviewed, 50 years ago, there were only eight provincial parks. Now we have 319 provincial parks, as well as 280 conservation reserves and 10 wilderness areas. They cover an area of about 9.2 million hectares—larger than the entire province of Nova Scotia. This world-class system provides places for more than 10 million visitors a year to enjoy the outdoors. Parks and protected areas have become increasingly more important to the health, vitality and economic prosperity of Ontario.

We also have a better idea of what we should be protecting and how we should be going about it. The changes to the parks system led us to conduct a far-reaching and extensive review and public consultation on our parks legislation. If passed, the new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act would strengthen the protection and preservation of Ontario's provincial parks and conservation reserves. For the first time, it would make ecological integrity a first priority. It is important to protect these special places and keep them healthy for future generations to benefit from. Strengthening ecological integrity is a key part of the initiative, and it is in keeping with the goals and objectives of Ontario's new biodiversity strategy. It also complements the natural spaces program, the Greenbelt Act, and our government's focus on a healthier environment for the people of Ontario.

Under the new legislation, we are enhancing accountability and transparency. The minister would be required to publicly report every five years on the health of our parks and protected areas. For the first time, the proposed legislation would consolidate existing acts dealing with protected areas. We would have one act for all the components of the protected areas system—something that is truly unique and progressive. The new legislation would guide how protected areas are both planned and managed, and these requirements would be outlined in law, and not just policies or regulations. Finally, this legislation would fulfill our government's commitment to introduce legislation that would ensure that our provincial parks are protected in perpetuity.

Another important step by this government was the launch on Monday of the Great Lakes conservation blueprint for biodiversity. For the last four years, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Nature Conservancy of Canada have collaborated on this project through a highly successful partnership. The two organizations have shared their knowledge and skills to complete this important project. The scientists who worked on the conservation blueprint used the best science currently available to assemble maps and analyze data on ecosystems and special biodiversity features across the Great Lakes region of Ontario. This is the first time such an analysis has been done in the province of Ontario. As a result, we now have a better understanding of our rich natural diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems on land and in the water.

The blueprint does not make recommendations or tell us what to do. Instead, it identifies a portfolio of high-quality natural areas that, if conserved, could sustain essential elements of our biodiversity, including species at risk. In other words, this is a tool, a valuable resource of information that will help us work together to focus our conservation efforts. Governments and organizations can use it to plan how and where to further protect Ontario's rich variety of plants, animals and ecosystems, while supporting the Great Lakes region's sustainable development.

This is important because we know biodiversity sustains life on our planet and has a direct impact on the health of all Ontarians. Natural processes clean the air we breathe, purify the water we drink and stabilize our climate. The Ontario government, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, other conservation organizations and many citizens in this province understand the risks of losing habitat that animals, birds, fish and we need to survive. Many areas that harbour significant natural features and species have been protected. These lands are included in the blueprint to help us build on our conservation achievements on crown lands and private lands throughout our province.

Conserving biodiversity is a complex challenge that requires action on many levels and requires our unwavering commitment. That is why our Great Lakes conservation blueprint for biodiversity is so incredibly important. By identifying a portfolio of high-quality natural areas in the Great Lakes region, this document significantly advances our efforts to conserve Ontario's biodiversity.

All the initiatives I have discussed today will help us leave our children a legacy of green spaces and a healthy natural environment. The legislation now before you at second reading, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005, if passed, would reinforce the conditions of the 1999 agreement signed by the province, the region of Durham and the city of Pickering. The legislation would ensure that all existing conservation easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve are held in perpetuity. It would also reinstate easements previously held and released by the city of Pickering. The proposed



amendments to the Conservation Land Act would both confirm that conservation easements can be used to protect, conserve and preserve agricultural lands, and clarify the role of the Minister of Natural Resources in enabling, amending or releasing easements enabled under the Conservation Land Act.

This act is just one of the steps our government has taken to conserve green space, agricultural lands, environmental lands, and recreation and resource lands in Ontario to ensure that our communities are strong and healthy for generations to come.

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I encourage everyone to support second reading of Bill 16, the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2005. I know there are other members who wish to comment on the legislation this evening. I look forward to hearing those comments. I want to commend the minister for his leadership on this issue and ensuring that we, as a province and as a government, move forward to protect lands in the province of Ontario for the benefit of all Ontarians for generations to come.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** I appreciate very much the opportunity to hear the speeches of the Minister of Natural Resources and the member for Sault Ste. Marie as they have led off the debate on Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

It's a rather brief bill, three pages in length. The bill is intended to override "any agreement or court order that invalidates an easement or covenant given or entered into under the Conservation Land Act on or before February 28, 2005, with respect to land in the area described in schedule 1."

It's my understanding that this bill is intended to amend "the Conservation Land Act to allow an easement or covenant under the act to be for the conservation, preservation or protection of land for agricultural purposes. An easement or covenant under the act is valid for the term specified in it and cannot be amended or released without the consent of the Minister of Natural Resources."

Certainly the minister and the member for Sault Ste. Marie have given this House an opportunity this afternoon to hear the government's perspective on this issue and why this bill is important. I think we, as a Legislature, have an important responsibility now to consider the arguments that have been made and to put forward some of the concerns, I'm sure, that we will hear over the course of the next few weeks. It underlines, as well, the importance of ensuring that this bill goes to a standing committee of the Legislature so that there are extensive public hearings so that people who are interested in this issue, who have a legitimate, genuine interest, are given an opportunity to have their say before the government passes it into law.

I'm looking forward to the presentation that's going to be made shortly by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, our chief opposition whip and also our critic, I

believe, for natural resources. He's going to give a lengthy presentation this afternoon, approximately an hour, explaining the position our caucus is going to be taking. I think he's an extraordinary member of the Legislature, and I certainly will be supporting what he does in terms of this bill. I look forward to further debate on it.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** One of the Conservative members just asked me if I can find things to say for a whole hour about this, and I want to assure you and the House, Mr. Speaker, that I certainly can.

On the surface, this seems pretty dry; it's about easements. But I want to remind this House, and I'll take a great deal of time later reminding this House, of the questions that I and my leader asked of the Minister of Natural Resources, the Chair of Management Board and the Minister of the Environment about this very issue; and of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who kept saying—and I'll be quoting at great length later—"Don't worry. It's OK. Trust us. We've got the greenbelt. We don't need to do anything else. We've got this great greenbelt now that's going to protect everything." We asked question after question—Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you will remember; you were sitting back here then—and we were laughed at: "Don't worry. What's the problem over there? The greenbelt will protect everything."

As I point out now and will point out later, although we are supporting this bill today, it doesn't resolve the fundamental, basic problem with the flaws in the greenbelt. We shouldn't have to come at these flaws piecemeal in this way. The danger still lurks around the corner that we're going to have these same kinds of problems, because we don't have a permanent greenbelt. We have a floating greenbelt, which means the government can take a piece out here, a very valuable piece of farmland, and put in the same amount of land somewhere else.

There is a variety of problems with the greenbelt as it stands. This is one of them. It didn't work out the way the ministers wanted it to. I will give you more information about that later, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** It's certainly my pleasure to rise and support Bill 16. One of the things that I want to talk about today, and I'm sure many of the members in the House today will be very surprised, is agricultural land and how important it is to our province. This bill will do that: It will protect the farmland that we need to grow the product that will feed the people of Ontario.

One of the things I have heard repeatedly in my many years of politics is about finding the balance between development and preserving our agricultural land. We all know that if we don't find the balance, what we have is crops of houses. It is very difficult to feed the people of Ontario from our housing developments. But we also need to move forward in an economic development manner that supports jobs and a strong economy within Ontario.



I believe that Bill 16 goes forward in what needs to be protected and what should be protected, and what we can do as a government to protect our farmland. We must ensure that there remains a viable quantity of agricultural prime land. If we don't, we will find ourselves in a situation where we no longer can grow the good-quality product that people have become used to within Ontario. So this bill goes forward, and not only that: It's also that our government understands the needs of the people and is finding the balance between what is required for good product and what is required to ensure that our economy stays strong.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I've listened with interest to the debate on Bill 16. This is definitely a bill that needs a complete hearing—a committee hearing, I believe. The conservation authorities do very good work for this province. The Grand River Conservation Authority—

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Martiniuk:**—works hard, as my friend the whip for the government party indicates, for all the communities on its long stretch. As a matter of fact, the Grand River is the second-longest heritage river in Canada, which is quite remarkable, and probably has the greatest population along its breadth. I particularly enjoy it because I happen to live right on the river. I can enjoy summer, spring, winter and fall watching the four bald eagles which periodically fly by my window, along with the unfortunate geese and ducks and other waterfowl.

This particular bill attempts to override an agreement or court order regarding possible easements or covenants affecting lands and attempts to assist, I believe, the conservation authorities in protecting lands for future generations. The question is, does it do what it intends to do? That is something we can explore fully at a full committee hearing.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister has two minutes in which to respond.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I'm very pleased to hear the comments after my parliamentary assistant, the member from Sault Ste. Marie—

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** A great member.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** A great member, absolutely, and I'm glad to have him on the MNR team. I say to the members that I think the support may be there for this, though I hesitantly look over to the member for Toronto-Danforth, who probably has much to say on this bill, after doing a careful analysis of it. But I know that in her heart she probably supports this.

I would say to her, on the specific point that she brought, that this bill is brought forward to make a very strong statement from the McGuinty government about how seriously we take conservation land. We do believe that the greenbelt legislation will protect this land. We also know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has the power through zoning orders to protect this land.

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But we want to make a very strong statement to this particular municipality, to say, "You shouldn't mess with easements like this," that we take conservation easements very seriously. We've made the point specifically about this, but as you can see as you read through the legislation, we've also strengthened our Conservation Lands Act so that this type of activity, by anybody, cannot happen again. We've learned through this that we need to strengthen our protections, because the McGuinty government feels that these protections are very important.

It's good and healthy for this House and the Ontario Legislature to have this debate, because I know that on all sides, we all agree that conserving land for generations to come is very important. In fact, I would say to the official opposition that this is their deal that we are protecting, a deal that they made where they did the right thing. It needs to be protected and we need to be protecting these conservation easements, if you will, in perpetuity. That's what we're going to do with this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join in the debate, the first day of second reading on Bill 16, where, of course, I get the opportunity as the critic to speak a full hour on this bill. I look forward to that. I certainly will be speaking to the principle of the bill, which is preserving our green spaces, preserving land and maintaining parks as well, although the bill itself, I might point out, is some two and a half pages long, so I will be speaking to the principle of preserving agricultural land and green spaces. The act, of course, is Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

As the minister just pointed out in his two-minute response, it was originally put in place by the former PC government, and they are following through on protecting agricultural land that was once set aside many years ago for a proposed Pickering airport. Now the government is saving that land for agricultural purposes in perpetuity, as I've stated.

I'm a bit surprised that this bill is being put forward by the Minister of Natural Resources. It is called An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve, so I thought perhaps it might be the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'm not quite sure what the logic is for the Minister of Natural Resources being responsible for putting this bill forward, but I look forward, in my hour, to talking about some of the past history of parks and protection of green space, including the government's most recent greenbelt legislation—some of the challenges with that. I think it's safe to say that probably all parties, and certainly our party, support preserving green space and support having many and adequate parks in the province as well.

This bill was introduced by the minister, David Ramsay. It came from a 1999 memorandum of understanding, signed, placing agricultural easements on some of the land in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve



sold by the Ontario Realty Corp., and the easements were held by Pickering. In 2004, Pickering passed the second phase of its growth management study, which called for development of the southern portion of the preserve. In January 2005, 15 preserve landowners began a legal challenge against Pickering to have easements removed from properties, and in February 2005, the province passed the Greenbelt Act, which protects the 1.8 million acres of land in the Golden Horseshoe from development, including the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

Certainly the greenbelt legislation has been controversial. I think it's important that we protect green space, but there must also be a plan. You can't just halt growth; you must have a plan for transit and roads to reduce gridlock and ensure that there is a plan for farmers, and municipalities within the greenbelt who have to have input in the future of their land use planning.

This legislation would never have been put forward had it not been for the leadership of the Ontario PC government, which took significant steps to protect the Oak Ridges moraine after a decade of inaction by the previous Liberal and NDP governments. We all remember Dalton McGuinty's solemn promise to stop houses on the Oak Ridges moraine and how quickly he backtracked from that promise once he got into office. Just to remind those watching, he promised that as soon as he was elected he was going to stop development of some 6,600 homes that were to be built on the Oak Ridges moraine. We now know that in fact he was able to stop development of roughly 700 homes—a far cry from the election promise.

I would like to give some credit to the PC critic on the greenbelt legislation, and that was Tim Hudak, the member from Erie—Lincoln. Tim has worked very hard in looking at the greenbelt legislation and trying to improve the legislation. He was successful in negotiating and getting it brought through the House leaders' process to get that legislation out to committee so that more public input could be made. I will raise some of the concerns Mr. Hudak raised in that process.

We certainly support the protection of green space, but we need to do it correctly. As Progressive Conservatives, we have a proud record of doing so through the Lands for Life process, the award-winning Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act and the creation of the Niagara Escarpment plan.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about the greenbelt law the government recently passed and about some of the concerns raised by the member from Erie—Lincoln. I note that he was concerned about farmers, for one thing. He brought up four fatal flaws of what he called the "greenbotch." To save the farm you have to save the farmer. If greenbelt farmers are unable to farm profitably, they will simply let the land go fallow. This will cause local councils in the province to be under considerable pressure to develop that land for housing or industry in the future. The greenbelt must include a solid, thoughtful, provincially funded plan to support the economic viability of the farm.

Very valid points. It's one thing to have farmland, but if you don't have a farmer who can be successful, productive and have some economic reward in running the farm, there's no point in having farmland.

I note that just today I received a letter from a farmer to members of Parliament:

"I am a farmer in Ontario. I am very proud of that fact. I work hard, my husband even harder to make a good living at farming. He is in the barn by 4:30 in the morning and comes in at night by 8 p.m. The hours in between seem to fill in effortlessly! We have a young family and we are very lucky to be able to bring them up on the farm. Our extended family loves coming to the farm to connect with where their food comes from and get back to understanding the basics. As a family, we work hard to create and take advantage to educate the public about farming and where food really comes from. Our county runs events like Farm Comes to Town, aimed at grade 5 students and open to the public, and Rural Ramble, which also is targeted at the general population.

"We feel that we do our job well, keep up with changes and regulations to ensure we do the best job possible. Government requirements and political issues do not always make it easy."

I think that fits into something like the greenbelt legislation: the way it affects a family farmer, the way it affects the value of the farm. A farmer whose farm was valued at, say, \$1 million is all of a sudden devalued in half so that they aren't able to borrow the money they need to borrow at the bank to be able to plant the crops etc. Those are things that need to be taken into consideration as we save agricultural land. We still need to make sure it's viable for the farmers.

In this letter they're asking for some help, pointing out that farmers are in an income crisis at this time and that they need assistance to stabilize their industry as quickly as possible. That's a letter I just received today.

Other points that were raised by Mr. Hudak deal with the greenbelt. You need "support for greenbelt municipalities. Municipalities in the greenbelt area will have their future growth frozen, limiting the growth of their tax base. They may make the future infrastructure investments like roads, sewers or the recreation centres unaffordable without significant tax increases.

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"A transportation infrastructure strategy must be in place to complement the greenbelt municipalities and support communities outside the greenbelt. This would include the Mid-Pen in Niagara, extending the 407 east through Durham and the 427 north to Barrie.

"The greenbelt"—I know Mr. Hudak made this point on many occasions—"should be based on good science, not political science. Land to be included in the greenbelt should be designated based on science, not by drawing arbitrary lines, or political considerations."

It's worrisome that the Liberal government gave \$25 million to the Greenbelt Foundation, and I'll come back to that.

Farmers would certainly appreciate receiving that kind of funding from government.



Municipalities would also appreciate getting this information.

Twenty-five-million-dollar funding: I consider that partisan advertising, something this government said they would not do.

I think that's a very valid point: The government has obviously made the greenbelt a big part of who they are, and they've also said in their election promises—I've got all 231 before me here, but in several places they've stated that they will ban partisan advertising. There are so many promises here that it makes it difficult to find that specific one. Through the back door, the government is now placing ads promoting the greenbelt. It's not directly doing them, but through a third party and through \$25 million in funding to the Greenbelt Foundation they are placing ads.

I don't know whether anyone has heard the ones on the radio to do with, "Have you seen a deer?" Also, they have full-page print ads in Toronto newspapers: "When we say wildlife, is this what you think of?" and they have some teddy bears; "When we say apple picking, is this what you think of?" and they have apples in a store; "When we say watering hole, is this what you think of?" and they have a picture of an old pump. It's also being advertised on the transit system around Toronto. I think that advertising is breaking their election promise of not having government-sponsored advertising.

Mr. Hudak raised many other concerns, and he also raised concerns about that Greenbelt Foundation advertising. I'd just like to note that he wrote to the Premier back on November 9, so quite recently.

"Tim Writes to Premier McGuinty, Objecting to the Wasteful Greenbelt Spending.

"Dear Premier McGuinty:

"I am writing to express my strong objection to your Liberal government's decision to spend taxpayers' money on political advertisements through the Greenbelt Foundation. Indeed, if you took the time to ask farmers or municipal leaders in the greenbelt area, they would have much better use for those dollars than advertisements, road signs or plush downtown offices.

"According to media reports, to date the \$25 million you have given to the Greenbelt Foundation has been used to rent expensive office space in the swanky Yorkville area of downtown Toronto, some of the city's most expensive real estate; conduct political polling and to carry out a \$1.5-million political advertising campaign. The current appointees to the Greenbelt Foundation were hand-picked by your office to carry out your political direction without any input from greenbelt communities. You have also bypassed the standing committee on government agencies, a committee of MPPs from all three political parties, in order to avoid any scrutiny of the appointees.

"Premier, municipalities like Lincoln, Grimsby, Pelham, St. Catharines, Thorold and Niagara-on-the-Lake have had their growth frozen under the Greenbelt Act. Furthermore, smaller communities like Lincoln, Grimsby, Pelham, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Thorold

have had their provincial transfers sharply reduced or totally eliminated. Surely, some of that \$25 million could be better invested in these greenbelt communities to make the greenbelt actually work.

"Similarly, this funding could have been far better used to assist our farmers. Greenbelt farmers have told the provincial Liberal government time and time again that the Greenbelt Act harms their viability. They have said that the best way to save the farm is to save the farmer.

"The combined impact of low commodity prices, subsidized products from abroad, higher fuel costs and an increasing burden of government regulations means that too many farmers are having great difficulty making ends meet." We've seen some huge rallies here at Queen's Park, so I think that is evidence of that. "No doubt greenbelt farmers would have far better advice on how to invest the Greenbelt Foundation's funds than" on "political advertising and polling.

"Furthermore, your Greenbelt Foundation would have far greater credibility if its office were located in one of the greenbelt communities. The fact that the Greenbelt Foundation is headquartered in downtown Toronto is absolutely mind-boggling to people who actually live in the greenbelt and are struggling to implement the legislation.

"Granting \$25 million to the Greenbelt Foundation does absolutely nothing to help farmers in need of provincial support, municipalities whose provincial funding has been drastically reduced or eliminated, nor taxpayers in the greenbelt dealing with property tax increases. I ask you to instead direct the \$25 million to helping the communities and farmers who have been charged with the expensive cost of implementing your Greenbelt Act."

It was signed by Tim Hudak, who is the MPP from Erie-Lincoln.

I note that at the plowing match the government announced advertising for the Foodland program, and yet there's more advertising being spent on this greenbelt program than on that recent Foodland Ontario advertising, which is meant to assist farmers.

Other failures of the greenbelt are pointed out by our critic, Mr. Hudak. "Greenbelt About Art of Politics, not Environmental Science: Libs Unveil Final Map at McMichael Art Gallery, No Plan for Farmers or Municipalities and No Science.

"Today, PC municipal affairs critic Tim Hudak criticized the McGuinty Liberals' failure to bring forward a plan to address the fatal flaws of their greenbelt legislation as they unveiled the final version of the greenbelt maps. The McGuinty Liberals chose to unveil the new maps in the McMichael art gallery.

"Today's announcement shows that the McGuinty Liberal greenbelt is more about the art of politics than environmental science," stated Hudak. "The McGuinty Liberals' own Group of 7 cabinet ministers—McGuinty, Gerretsen, Caplan, Dombrowsky, Peters, Bradley and Ramsay—are trying to paint a pretty political portrait, but hidden under this canvas are major errors and missing pieces that have turned the greenbelt into a greenbotch."



"The final greenbelt plan:

"Failed to bring forward an agricultural viability plan for greenbelt farmers;

"Failed to respond to greenbelt municipalities' requests for support;

"Failed to address any appeal mechanism whatsoever except behind the closed doors of the minister's office;

"Failed to publicly release the science behind the greenbelt decisions;

"Failed to address gridlock and the increasing commute times due to the leapfrog effect caused by the greenbelt.

"The fact that the government bowed to our pressure to include Boyd Conservation Area, Pleasantview in Dundas and Beverly marsh in Wellington county is a positive step," said Hudak. "It is unfortunate that we had to go through a political process" to make these changes happen.

"The PCs had put forward a motion at committee to include Boyd Conservation Area in the greenbelt. However, the Liberal members of the general government committee voted against the opposition motion. Today, Boyd Conservation Area was added to the greenbelt due to opposition and public pressure.

"Hudak brought similar pressure to bear in the Legislature and committee to include other areas such as the Beverly marsh and Pleasantview in Dundas."

So I think what Mr. Hudak is pointing out is that it should be based not on political science but on environmental science so that areas that are sensitive are included in that greenbelt. Mr. Hudak did a lot of work on the greenbelt, and he needs to be complimented for how hard he worked on that.

I would like to talk a bit about the commitment of some of the Liberal members who were from the area to this bill, to the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

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I note that the member from the area, Mr. Arthurs, the member from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, has been on record on several occasions opposing preserving this land. In fact, in the 2003 election campaign, he very much opposed preserving this land. So I wonder what has happened with his position. Will he be supporting this bill or will he be voting against it?

I would like to quote from this article, which says, "In an interview after his provincial election victory last Thursday, Arthurs said his position on the development north of Taunton Rd. in Pickering has not changed."

"Arthurs has said he would prefer to put housing and people wherever development is best suited across Seaton and the agricultural preserve.

"He said he will await the results of the study before approaching Premier-elect Dalton McGuinty or any of his new Liberal colleagues for changes to party or government policy.

"In a series of newspaper ads and hundreds of election-like signs sprinkled throughout her riding, Ecker"—that's Janet Ecker—"was portrayed as the villain who wanted to 'pave over farmland,' when in fact

her government had placed a development freeze on the entire area, and effectively over planning powers for the area.

"Arthurs has said he favours rethinking the strict no-development strategy.

"Ecker said she will be urging the new Liberal government to protect all the agricultural preserve and the environmentally sensitive lands in Seaton."

So we can see very clearly that Janet Ecker was supporting the idea of preserving this agricultural land.

When Mr. Arthurs was the mayor of Pickering, he said that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing cannot be trusted to act in the city's best interests.

"Mayor Arthurs has said he thought the agreement was not permanent." That's the agreement to protect the land. "He said his stance had nothing to do with his bid to become the Liberal MPP for the Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge riding."

I would also like to point out from another media article in the Metroland newspapers that there were some financial contributions that went to Mr. Arthurs from developers, which certainly raise some concerns: "Arthurs Draws Red Flags; Says \$25,000 in Donations Recognizes 'Common Interest in Growth.'" This is from Wednesday, August 4, 2004.

"Despite concerns from Pickering residents, MPP Wayne Arthurs is defending his election campaign contributions, including \$25,000 from one address.

"The concerns about the Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge MPP's donation list have been raised in public meetings by local individuals and groups, including Lorne Almack, a member of the local environmental group the Green Door Alliance.

"The \$25,000 came in 25 separate \$1,000 donations from one address—27 Buggey Lane in Ajax. The address is the head office of Coughlan Homes, owned by developer Jerry Coughlan.

"He's been a big supporter for a period of time. We share a common interest in growth in Durham region, both residential, commercial and recreational," said Mr. Arthurs, who raised almost \$91,000 in total.

"Mr. Almack was expecting to see the names of developers on Mr. Arthurs's campaign contribution list but wasn't expecting to see \$25,000 from the same address.

"It surprised me that there were so many (donations)," he said.

"While Mr. Almack acknowledges the donations are legal, he wants to see the act changed, arguing election donations from developers could make politicians sympathetic to future development applications.

"What the Green Door Alliance and other residents are questioning is Mr. Arthurs's position on developing the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, which Mr. Coughlan and his business partners own land in.

"I made no secret that prior to the provincial campaign I supported Mr. Coughlan's projects that I thought were good for the community," Mr. Arthurs said.

"He added he believes the land Mr. Coughlan owns on the preserve is a good place for development.

"That position wasn't created by his interest in the land," he argued. "I see those lands as an opportunity for development, not to be fully developed, but there are opportunities for development the same as there are in the Seaton lands (in North Pickering.)"

"Mr. Coughlan and his business partner Ron Halliday briefly addressed the issue in a telephone interview, saying the donations reflect their belief in Mr. Arthurs and the Liberal Party. They did not comment further.

"Mr. Arthurs's stance on the preserve is contrary to his Liberal government's, which is against developing the area."

It certainly will be interesting, as this bill moves forward, to see whether Mr. Arthurs's position has changed, because it's obvious that in the election he was in favour of developing this land that is to be protected by Bill 16. Obviously, when you see those sorts of contributions from a developer who has a direct interest, it raises some concerns.

I would like to talk for a few minutes about some of the positive programs that were put in place by the former PC government. Smart Growth is one of them. In January 2001, Premier Mike Harris announced the need for a made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy for promoting and managing growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment.

To give you a little background, the Smart Growth panel for central Ontario was set up in 2002 to advise the government on a long-term growth plan to address gridlock and waste management. Smart Growth focused on balanced growth, as opposed to increased intensification. We specifically stated that we wanted to prevent leapfrogging, and I think that's one of the concerns with the greenbelt legislation that the government has passed. It will save land immediately north of Toronto but may make commuting and gridlock worse as people who don't build just right north of Toronto move to Barrie and other communities but still have to drive to Toronto and other places in southern Ontario for work. They'll leapfrog the greenbelt, and growth will intensify and increase in places like Barrie, but then you make the daily commute and the gridlock on the 400 and other highways that much worse.

The Smart Growth plan was much more complete in that it examined affordable housing, waste management, environmental protection, gridlock, and sewer and water resources from a long-term growth perspective. We followed up the Smart Growth plan with investments in public transit through our Golden Horseshoe transit investment partnership, which was \$10 billion over 10 years—as I recall, that was with all three levels of government. Smart Growth was similar to Places to Grow, in that it was based on the nodes and corridors model, whereby the most intense urban growth is in the nodes, and these are connected by transportation corridors that also contain urban growth intensification.

Our Smart Growth focused on gridlock, where Places to Grow, combined with the greenbelt, leads to leapfrogging and longer commute times.

Our Smart Growth plan took municipal plans into account in planning. One of the recommendations of the central Ontario Smart Growth plan was to preserve employment lands as designated by official plans, not as dictated by Queen's Park.

Smart Growth goals were set out by our government. Some of the goals included using existing infrastructure and resources to increase the capacity for economic growth, investing wisely in new infrastructure, managing growth by making tough choices about where development should go, expanding transportation choices within and between communities, protecting natural areas and farmland for future generations, and encouraging growth in areas where it would have the least impact on the environment.

The Smart Growth panel put considerable effort into research and analysis of alternative futures for the Golden Horseshoe area. I'd like to quote from Mayor Hazel McCallion, who chaired the panel: "The essence of Smart Growth is to build consensus among diverse stakeholders, to come up with a common vision and to achieve broad public support for that vision.... That's why we want the public involved in the advice we present to the province."

In February 2002, the Ontario government created the panel and appointed a cross-section of community leaders—including Hazel McCallion as the chair—representing local government, industry, transportation and the environment. Members were asked to advise the province on how to plan for future growth in ways that enhance the environment, strengthen communities and promote economic prosperity.

After months of working together, the panel members came up with draft recommendations. Public feedback on the recommendations helped shape the panel's final advice to the government. Another quote from Hazel McCallion: "Our advice wrestles with the question, 'How can we best prepare central Ontario for a healthy and prosperous future?' ... We have sketched out a way to move forward to enhance our overall quality of life through balanced growth, improved transit and protection of our environment."

Commending the Ontario government for its leadership in creating the Smart Growth initiative, McCallion added, "Premier Ernie Eves and Minister David Young have already demonstrated their commitment to Smart Growth by acting on our interim advice. We are confident that all levels of government will follow their lead and use our plan as a springboard for action."

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Called Shape the Future, the report outlines advice on a set of strategic directions for managing growth in central Ontario. The panel's strategic directions stress the importance of fostering balanced growth, developing an integrated transportation network, protecting the environment and adopting more collaborative approaches to waste management.



Among its specific recommendations, the report calls for establishing an accountable stakeholder body, advisory to the province, to oversee implementation of a Smart Growth strategy across the central Ontario zone; legislation that supports Smart Growth goals; a provincial facilitator to mediate among levels of government and the private sector in support of Smart Growth; and heightened inter-ministerial coordination.

Mayor McCallion emphasized that the report built on the insights gained through consultations with a diverse group of stakeholders, experts and the general public. While recognizing the Ontario government's central role, she stressed that achieving the goals of Smart Growth would require the participation and co-operation of the federal government, municipalities and the private sector.

In 2001, the then Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Chris Hodgson, introduced the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan. It was another example of a Conservative initiative. He did a lot of work and a lot of consultation in the process of developing that Oak Ridges moraine protection plan.

Another significant initiative taken on by the Harris Conservative government was the Great Lakes Heritage Coast process. The Great Lakes Heritage Coast includes all of the Ontario coastline of Lake Superior, the north shore of the St. Mary's River, and the coast of Lake Huron to the eastern coast of Georgian Bay. It includes most of the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. The coastline sweeps along 2,900 kilometres of spectacular landscapes and shoreline. Major communities along the coast include Thunder Bay, Red Rock, Nipigon, Marathon, Wawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Killarney, Parry Sound and Port Severn. The Great Lakes Heritage Coast covers some 1.1 million hectares of coastline and inland areas. It extends two kilometres inland from the shoreline of Georgian Bay, the North Channel and Lake Superior from Port Severn to Wawa; five kilometres inland from Wawa to Marathon; and five kilometres or to Highway 17 from Marathon to the US border.

The heritage coast has historic significance for Ontario. Ojibwa, Cree and Huron communities were established in the area by the 1600s. Étienne Brûlé, in 1610, was the first European to visit the coast. The heritage coast was a major route for opening up the central part of Canada.

The policy statement on the Great Lakes Heritage Coast is found in the Ontario's Living Legacy land use strategy. The policy statement identifies the Great Lakes Heritage Coast as an area for special planning and management. The idea is to take a comprehensive approach to developing an overall vision of protecting and enjoying the significant values along the coast. Policies for the coast identified in the strategy apply to all crown lands, waters, lake beds, crown islands and the areas in between these along the coast. The policies do not apply to aboriginal or privately owned lands. However, the goal is to encourage owners of these lands to become involved.

Ontario's Living Legacy, which was a process started by former Premier Mike Harris, identifies the Great

Lakes Heritage Coast as one of the nine featured areas identified for a broad range of outdoor activities and international marketing. The Ontario government has made moving ahead on a strategy for the coast its first priority in implementing the featured areas.

The vision identified in the Living Legacy strategy for the heritage coast is to protect the coast's scenic beauty and its natural ecosystems; promote the potential for recreation, tourism and other economic benefits through a network of parks and protected areas; and encourage development compatible with the overall intent for the area; foster co-operation, education, public information and partnerships with other levels of government, aboriginal communities and interest groups in planning and management of the heritage coast.

That heritage coast, as I've mentioned, covers a good part of the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. It's spectacular and one of the natural wonders of the world, that shoreline that is mainly my riding, the coastline of Georgian Bay. It's absolutely spectacular. If you've never visited it, you really should come to Parry Sound. Either take a flight with the Thirty Thousand Islands airline and fly up the coast—it's probably the best way to see the thousands and thousands of islands and rocks—or go out with a Thirty Thousand Islands cruise line and do a tour if you don't like going up in a seaplane.

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** Where do they leave from?

**Mr. Miller:** You'd leave from Parry Sound. I'm being asked by another member how you get on the Thirty Thousand Islands cruise. You get on the boat from Parry Sound to make that. It's quite spectacular. You can take a flight right from Parry Sound at the dock in a seaplane, go up the coast and see if you can take a flight out to Henry's Fish Restaurant and have a pickerel dinner or lunch. That's an interesting way to see the coastline.

That was an initiative that was started under Ontario's Living Legacy by Mike Harris. He doesn't get a lot of credit for his environmental initiatives, but the Oak Ridges moraine, the Great Lakes Heritage Coast—the Lands For Life and Ontario's Living Legacy process brought about the biggest increase in parks and protected areas in Ontario's history. That's something probably a lot of people just aren't aware of. The Harris government created a greater number of parks and protected areas than all previous Ontario governments. It protected 12% of the land mass, as recommended by the Brundtland commission, the standard set by the United Nations. I heard the parliamentary assistant, in his talk, say that 50 years ago there were eight parks in the province of Ontario, and now there are some 319 parks, 280 conservation areas and 10 wilderness areas covering a huge landmass. I know the area that was increased in parks and protected areas by Mike Harris was the size of Lake Ontario.

When I look around the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka—I have my map of Parry Sound-Muskoka to help me out—I see the many parks that have been created through this process. That's proof of the process. There



are so many parks now in Parry Sound–Muskoka, some that you can visit, some that are conservation reserves, some that are fairly difficult to get into, but beautiful parks like Island Lake Forest and Barrens northeast of Parry Sound, a fairly large park, with its main lake in the middle being Island Lake.

Last year, I had the pleasure of paddling down a well-known canoe route, my first-ever canoe trip, with my son Winston and his friend Riley and his dad, Dan Mulligan. We paddled down the French River—a beautiful trip. I highly recommend that. That's a Canadian heritage, French River Provincial Park, and I'd recommend it. We started out east of Highway 69 and paddled for a week down out on to Georgian Bay and back to Hartley Bay. There are good maps and identified campsites, with all the modern conveniences you would need in a campsite, which isn't too much, other than the spectacular, beautiful setting. So many parks—I look around the map of Parry Sound–Muskoka.

1700

I had the privilege, when the Queen last visited Ontario, of being at the CNE when she came through, and Jerry Ouellette, then the Minister of Natural Resources, unveiled the naming of Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park, of which a tiny part, the northeast corner, hits Parry Sound–Muskoka. There are literally hundreds of parks around the region. Many are brand new parks that have been created.

Also in our area, another initiative that's been happening in the last few years is the park-to-park trail program that had significant funding from the past Ontario government and hopefully from the government going forward. That park-to-park trail will connect parks such as Algonquin, Killbear, Massasauga—a number of different parks will be connected by this park-to-park trail system.

They're also managing the Seguin trail, a well-known trail that goes through the Parry Sound area, just south of Parry Sound. It was originally the J.R. Booth railway, which ran all the way from Ottawa to Parry Sound to Depot Harbour and is now part of the park trail system, although they are facing some real challenges on that system, in particular with the cost of maintaining the bridges. I'll come back to some other parks if I have time in my hour.

Getting back to the Ontario Living Legacy, which was to protect some 12% of the land mass as recommended by the Brundtland commission, the standards set by the United Nations: To give some perspective to the size of the increase that was brought to our park and protected areas by Mike Harris, it's an area that would cover all of Ontario south of Algonquin Provincial Park, or nearly three quarters of England. Also, \$100 million was put into this to expand the Ontario Living Legacy into a province-wide initiative to enhance protection, conservation and recovery efforts for species at risk in Ontario. Also part of the initiative was to fund more youth programs and resource stewardship jobs for young people, and to protect and enhance fish and wildlife and their

habitats. We acquired more natural areas in southern Ontario, regulated new parks and protected areas in southern Ontario and in Ontario as a whole. I note that many of the existing parks had areas added to them; many were expanded by this process.

There was also the creation of signature sites that would become an important tool for increasing tourism from around the world. Included in this process was the Ontario Forest Accord, a historic partnership to ensure both new protected areas and measures to strengthen the economy of northern and central Ontario. I know that as that is being implemented, the forestry sector certainly has some concerns with maintaining enough area to have enough fibre to keep their businesses viable.

The Ontario Forest Accord, which was a historic accord with environmentalists involved, forest companies and other groups, laid out conditions under which new parks and conservation reserves would be set aside. It also established a process for creating additional protected areas which have been mutually agreed to by the forest industry and the environmental community. That was something Mike Harris did that most people aren't aware of.

The Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board provided advice to the Minister of Natural Resources, supported implementation of the accord, monitored the creation of parks and reserves, and helped resolve disputes.

The government also committed to helping local communities increase access to hunting and fishing, and it included measures to maintain wood flows and costs of wood for mills. That's very important when we look the situation facing the forest industry sector at this time, particularly in northern Ontario. Maintaining the cost of wood supplies has gotten out of whack in the last three years. We've learned in the last few months that delivered wood cost, as stated for Ontario forestry mills and paper companies, is US\$55 per cubic metre. That's the highest delivered wood cost in the world. That's the cost of planting the trees, cutting them down, building the roads—everything involved with getting the fibre to the mill. The world average is some US\$35 per cubic metre.

The forestry sector in northern Ontario is in tough shape right now. We've seen that the Minister of Natural Resources had a forest sector competitiveness report undertaken, and so far he hasn't implemented the advice of that expert committee, unfortunately. They made some 26 recommendations, many geared toward reducing that delivered wood cost, but so far he's only implemented a few that will have maybe a \$1-per-cubic-metre effect on the cost.

The forestry sector is hurting right now, particularly in northern Ontario. Many mills are closing across the north, particularly paper mills and pulp-and-paper mills, where the cost of energy and this government's high-priced energy programs are really making it difficult for a number of companies. Today, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines made a statement to do with the mining sector, and I pointed out in my response to him that the mine I had the privilege of going to open, the



North American Palladium mine at Lac des Iles, north of Thunder Bay, just recently laid off 60 people, again because of that high energy price and the energy policies that this government has.

I was talking about the Ontario Forest Accord before I got sidetracked there. The Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board provided advice to the Minister of Natural Resources, supported the implementation of the accord, monitored the creation of parks and reserves and helped to resolve disputes. There would also be measures as part of that to increase wood supply into the future.

Some of the new parks created through this process, the Lands for Life, Ontario Living Legacy: In the Parry Sound district were Jevens and Silver Lake, Oxbow Lake Forest, Raganooter Lake, Big Deer Lake, Little Spring Lake, Ferrie Township Forest, Bear Creek, Bear Lake Peatland, Dutcher Lake, Ahmic Forest and Rock Barrens, Shawanaga Lake, Island Lake Forest and Barrens, Ferguson township, White Pine Forest and Big East River. Those are all just in the Parry Sound district.

In the Bancroft district, we have Crowe River Swamp, Sharpe Bay Fen, Plastic Lake and Dawson Pond, and Silent Lake Addition.

In the Kemptville area, we have the White Lake and Burnt Lands.

In the Pembroke district: Alexander Stewart, Petawawa Terrace, Bonnechere River, Westmeath Bog, Snake River Marsh and Mud Lake/Creek.

In the Sudbury district, we have Venetian Creek Old Pine, Kawawia Lake Old Growth, Green Lake Old Pine.

The list goes on and on; literally hundreds of different additions to parks that Mike Harris brought in through this process, and 19 conservation reserves, including several in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka:

The Bear Creek Conservation Reserve, which is a 212-hectare site in the town of Kearney: Part of it lies within a winter deer yard and includes a yellow birch forest growing on sands and gravel deposited by glaciers around the creek. The Bear Lake Peatland Conservation Reserve is a 3,845-hectare site featuring extensive peatland and bog and excellent moose habitat near the hamlet of Bear Lake in the Parry Sound district. The Big Deer Lake Conservation Reserve is a 176-hectare site, 15 kilometres from Magnetawan. The Big East Provincial Park is a 1,050-hectare waterway park that follows the Big East River to the Arrowhead Park. Crowe River Swamp Conservation Reserve is a 189-hectare site in Chandos township, Peterborough. It's the largest and least disturbed collection of deciduous swamp habitats, bounded by landforms left by glaciers and moraines.

The Ferguson Township White Pine Forest Conservation Reserve is 364 hectares, 18 kilometres north of Parry Sound. It provides inland habitat for the nationally threatened Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. The coast of Georgian Bay is well known as one of the prime areas for the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. In fact, as a side bar, on that canoe trip that I did two years ago down the French River, I saw my first-ever rattlesnake. It was actually swimming in the French River and went to climb up a rock face as we paddled by in a canoe.

## 1710

The Ferrie Township Forest Conservation Reserve is a 474-hectare site, 15 kilometres northwest of Magnetawan. It includes white pine, tamarack and treed muskeg on dunes and beach deposits. The Island Lake Forest and Barrens Conservation Reserve: I had the pleasure of staying one night on that lake once many years ago. It's a 15,452 hectare site and includes several rare plant species in this habitat for the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. It's situated 45 kilometres north of Parry Sound.

The Jackson Lake Conservation Reserve is a 1,166-hectare site, with mixed and sparse forest northwest of Geraldton. Jevens and Silver Lake Conservation Reserve: 2,144 hectares north of Kahshe Lake, again in the district of Muskoka. It features red oak and white pine forest—so many unique, natural features on these conservation reserves. The Kama Cliffs Conservation Reserve: 3,713 hectares. It has impressive cliffs on the north shore of Lake Superior. It's 18 kilometres east of Nipigon, and that shore of Lake Superior is quite spectacular. I had the opportunity last year to drive it for the first time as the northern development and mines critic on a northern seven-day trip. Even though it was April and not the most beautiful time of the year, it was still spectacular driving that coastline.

Little Spring Conservation Reserve: That's a 106-hectare site northwest of Magnetawan. Neys Provincial Park: That's 1,939 hectares and features caribou habitat and spawning areas for sport and commercial fish species, breeding colonies of herring gulls, and includes islands and islets in Lake Superior, a whaleback barge shipwreck, Pukaskwa Pits man-made rock depressions. It's situated about 200 kilometres from Thunder Bay.

The Living Legacy built on the work of the Lands For Life consultation process. The Harris government accepted some 213 of 242 recommendations made during that process, and it was an extensive process. More than 65,000 Ontarians responded to the Lands For Life process, which spanned many months. You can contrast that with the consultation process the current government has just gone through with another bill they introduced, Bill 11, where the consultation process lasted some two months. This is the review of parks the government just introduced a couple of weeks ago, with a total of 425 participants at open houses, 141 written submissions and a total of 1,118 form letters from NGOs. That's quite a contrast to the more than 65,000 Ontarians who responded to the Lands For Life process Mike Harris brought in.

This is just the regular road map I used to look at some of the parks in my area, and you see all many, many parks, and as I noted, they have some spectacular natural features.

This year I had the pleasure of becoming a new convert to canoeing, enjoying the beautiful parks we have, taking my son and his friend and father, going with them on another week-long canoe trip for my summer holiday. This year we went to the Temagami area and had a spectacular week there, a week with hardly a drop of



rain. We managed to get three days of rain, but otherwise we visited parts of Lady Evelyn provincial park and climbed Maple Mountain and walked the old growth pine trails on Lake Obabika—something I would recommend to anyone.

Quite a huge expansion of parks brought in by the past government of Mike Harris, not someone known necessarily for that kind of thing and probably not recognized for the huge increase of parks and protected areas that he brought in.

I would like to talk briefly about another initiative this government brought forward, and that was the closure of the Leslie M. Frost Centre. The Leslie M. Frost Centre borders my riding and the riding of the member from Haliburton, Laurie Scott. It was owned by the Ministry of Natural Resources and used for training of conservation officers and other government officials. Also, more importantly, it was used to educate thousands of school-children on our environment and provide children with an opportunity to stay at the Leslie M. Frost Centre and experience the outdoors year-round. In fact, when I was in grade 6, I think, I had the privilege of going to the Frost centre in the middle of winter and spend a couple of nights there. We were out snowshoeing, orienteering and learning about the natural environment.

Unfortunately, this government, with very little notice, closed the Leslie M. Frost Centre. I learned about it in late June, I think it was. I learned about it with about a day's notice, and then, two weeks later, the centre was closed. In terms of government spending, they were saving a tiny amount of money. I think it was around \$1 million that they projected to save. I would say, when you think of all the government employees who were being trained there—you would have to work that in—they may not have saved any money at all. They do point out that there were going to be some capital requirements for the water system because of the new water rules, but those are faced by any business in rural and small-town Ontario.

I think it was a very short-sighted decision by the government to close the Leslie M. Frost Centre. I am pleased that the Chair of Management Board at the time, Mr. Phillips, at least was willing to set up a committee to look at future possibilities. I'm hopeful that the government will recognize they made a mistake and move forward with future plans where we'll see some educational component continuing at the Leslie M. Frost Centre.

In the a little bit of time I have left, I should wrap up and get back to this bill and state that of course we are in favour of protecting agricultural land, protecting parks, but we also have to do so in a balanced and fair way. I pointed out many problems that happened with the greenbelt legislation. The one thing we will be pushing for is to make sure that this bill goes before committee. In fact, we were hoping to have it go to committee right after first reading; we're in second reading right now. We will want to see that the bill goes to committee so that members of the public, farmers and anyone else affected by the bill will have an opportunity to comment on the

bill. The key part of that process is that hopefully the government is listening and will make any changes that make sense. Certainly, protecting our agricultural land is important, but protecting the farmer is also important, and making sure there is a commitment to make our farms in Ontario viable is very important.

As I wrap up, I would just like to talk about one other provincial park, and that is the Hardy Lake Provincial Park, which is in the Muskoka area. Actually, the property was owned by a millionaire, Nelson Davis, back in the 1970s. I felt that I had some affect, myself, on the creation of that one myself, because back in about 1978, my father was the Minister of Natural Resources. I had just finished school and returned from a trip to New Zealand, and there I noted that all the waterfront—this would have been 1980, actually—in New Zealand is public access. It doesn't matter whether it's a stream, a river, a lake or ocean front, it's all public access. You can have a million-dollar home there, but you can still walk across the front of it and have a picnic if you want. I was complaining to my father, who was the Minister of Natural Resources, that in Muskoka there are a lot of significant cottages and private land, but only a few small beaches that were available at that time for the public. He, as the Minister of Natural Resources for the crown, bought the estate of Nelson Davis, which included five miles of shoreline of Lake Muskoka and a lake, Hardy Lake. It's now Hardy Lake Provincial Park. I was pleased to see that, and now the township of Muskoka Lakes has built a great walking trail around that park and it's saved in a fairly developed part of Muskoka. There's five miles of shoreline and some natural beauty; it's preserved in its natural state and there's great access to be able to see that on this trail.

1720

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Bill 16, An Act respecting the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve. As I mentioned previously, we will be looking forward to seeing the bill go to committee and we'll be looking forward to some input from the public on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Churley:** Of course I'll be supporting the bill, but you've got to hear my comments, which will be coming shortly.

I'm responding to the full hour of comments from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, and I think he is my MPP. Now, those of you from my Toronto area may wonder how that could be, but aren't you the MPP for lake Restoule?

**Mr. Miller:** Yes.

**Ms. Churley:** I have a little house on lake Restoule, and coming from Labrador, I always have a place—I can't go any farther north than that, because the drive back and forth would be too far.

**Mr. Miller:** Are you on Restoule Lake?

**Ms. Churley:** Yes, I am. I'm on Restoule Lake, in a little tiny—I call it the hovel. I go up there as often as I can. I think it's important, as we debate something like—because to the general public, when you're talking about



preserving easements, the eyes glaze over. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure yours aren't glazing over, though; no. You know the importance of this. But I think hearing about parks and the member's own experiences—I heard him talk about seeing a rattlesnake. Did you guys hear him say that? It's pretty neat. I've never seen a rattlesnake. But I know that driving along over to visit friends on the road in lake Restoule, a moose, just a majestic moose, was standing right in front of the car—it stopping, us stopping, and just staring at each other; seeing loons and wildlife and all of those things. We here in the city need to be reminded from time to time what we're talking about when we're here talking about greenbelt and preserving agricultural land and parks and why it is so fundamentally important not just to the environment and preserving farmland, but for everybody to have the ability to enjoy the parks of this province. So I quite enjoyed his conversation with us today about all of those parks in Ontario.

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** I'm delighted to join in a few comments with respect to Bill 16. I have to say that it's very pleasing to see members of the House speaking in support of Bill 16—and why not? I think it's so propitious that our government and the Minister of Natural Resources have introduced this piece of legislation, which goes a long way in accomplishing what started back in 1999, I believe, in preserving some very important agricultural land in Ontario. One needs only to go into one of our supermarkets, if you will, or take a drive maybe 20 minutes out of Toronto, to see how important it is to preserve the agricultural land.

What's more important with this bill is that it's in perpetuity. This is what the bill does. It's to protect this agricultural land which has been identified as prime agricultural land, to protect it in perpetuity. Often we say in this House that it's window dressing. Well, this is one of the many times that the Liberal government has recognized the importance of doing things in the long term. So not only can we provide for the farmers, but for all the people of Ontario, who will need good farming, quality farming, for the long term of preserving the farmlands in Ontario.

What better time to do it than now, to recognize that some 4,700 acres in the Duffins Creek area are so valuable and so important that they need to be protected? It's nice to see that there is support in the House to move this bill forward and get approval as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker:** Before I recognize the next question or comment, there is a great deal of chatter going on in the House and people standing up. I don't know whether they intend to speak or not.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arnott:** I'm very pleased to have the chance to congratulate the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for giving this House one full hour of good ideas about Bill 16 this afternoon. I know the Minister of Natural Resources was here to listen to, I think, the entire presentation of the member for Parry Sound. In fact, they're conferring right this minute. I know the camera won't pan over, but

the Minister of Natural Resources and the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka are comparing notes at this very minute to determine how they can work together to make sure that Bill 16 is in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

I was very pleased to hear the member for Toronto–Danforth, in her comments, talking about Commanda being in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. I'm very pleased to inform the House that my mother-in-law, Mrs. Allie McCabe, comes from a little community called Arnstein, which is in the Parry Sound district in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. The McCabe family cottage, where we spend as much time as possible in the summer, is in Arnstein. So I've enjoyed spending much time in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka through the years, and I'm glad the member for Toronto–Danforth—I just learned today that she spends her cottage time in the very same area.

I know the member for Toronto–Danforth is about to undertake a very significant challenge as a candidate in the upcoming federal election. I want to take this opportunity to wish her all the best, in case I don't have a chance in the tributes that will likely come toward the end of the time of three of our members who are going to be testing the waters federally. I've served in the Legislature with the member for Toronto–Danforth for some 15 years now, and I have long admired her commitment to the people of her riding and the principles she so passionately believes in as a member of the NDP. I would certainly, as much as possible, like to wish her all the very best as she undertakes her responsibilities as a candidate in the upcoming federal election.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North):** I would like to join in the general support of Bill 16. I'd also like to commend and recognize the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his sighting of rattlesnakes. I think we on the government side from time to time have the similar experience of sighting rattlesnakes.

This government is acting on its plan to conserve Ontario's prime agricultural land to ensure that our communities are strong and healthy for generations to come. If this particular bill is passed, it would ensure that the city of Pickering honours a 1999 agreement with the province to permanently set aside the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve for agricultural uses.

What exactly is this particular preserve of land? It's a very important part of the agricultural heritage of Ontario. It includes something in the order of 4,700 acres of prime land in north Pickering. These lands, as you'll appreciate, are part of a larger area of close to 40,000 acres that was expropriated in the 1970s for the proposed airport.

We, as a government, cannot sit idly by and allow the abandonment of these easements, because this will fundamentally undermine the efforts of land trusts that are reaching out to landowners. Land trusts have been promoting this kind of conservation and easements as a permanent protection; as my colleague said earlier, in perpetuity.

In summary, I want to say that this particular bill is absolutely worthy of our support. It's a matter of integrated, intelligent growth, eventually to leave a legacy of protected agricultural land and green space, a heritage that cannot be replaced and is irrevocable for our children.

**The Acting Speaker:** Before I recognize the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka for his comments, there is a great deal of chatter going on immediately to my right: members standing up, members chattering.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** The minister is lobbying us.

**The Acting Speaker:** I understand that, but I think the lobbying can take place outside.

The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka.

1730

**Mr. Miller:** It's my pleasure to respond to the comments from the members for Toronto-Danforth, Waterloo-Wellington, Etobicoke North and York West.

I note that the member from Toronto-Danforth has a cottage on Restoule Lake, and the Restoule River, I think, was one of the parks that was added on in the Lands for Life process. You can actually paddle now from your cottage up the Restoule River to the French River and follow that all the way to Georgian Bay, member from Toronto-Danforth. I'd highly recommend that. You'll probably see a rattlesnake along the way.

I also note that the member from Waterloo-Wellington is up in the same area there, near Arnstein, which is certainly a beautiful area.

While the comments were going on, the Minister of Natural Resources and I were looking at this map of Parry Sound-Muskoka, at the literally hundreds of new parks that have been created in recent years, certainly a great opportunity for people who want to get an experience of the beautiful parks and protected areas in Ontario.

We'll look forward to Bill 16 being debated at second reading here in the Legislature. We also look forward to the bill, as I mentioned previously, having an opportunity to go to committee so that there can be further public input, so that if there are any problems with it, they can be identified and amendments can happen to the bill at that time.

Thank you very much for your time this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Churley:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very sorry to have to say that I'm going to have to break the calmness, the feeling of love and peace that's been generated in this place, particularly by the speech about parks from the member who spoke previously.

First of all, let me say that New Democrats are pleased that the government has finally moved to heed our calls and many other people's calls to uphold the easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

Everybody here knows, and you do, Mr. Speaker, because you've been sitting here over the last several months, that the NDP has been calling for action to

uphold the agricultural easements on Duffins-Rouge for some time. I remember going to caucus meetings—you're well familiar with our question period meetings, where we decide what questions out of all of the important questions we're going to ask that day—with me pressuring really hard to go on this, because this came to our attention in the process of the greenbelt going through and all those good things happening around the greenbelt. In the meantime, we were watching what was happening with developers and the town and the town council with the Duffins-Rouge area.

It started when our leader, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, raised the issue for the first time on March 7, and then I asked follow-up questions on several occasions in April and May. We were very, very concerned at the time regarding the government's lack of action to uphold the easements in light of Pickering council and Durham region's decision to remove them.

With the introduction of this legislation, the government has finally admitted, as far as I'm concerned, that the status quo could not suffice and novel special action is required if the agricultural easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve are to be upheld. That is what we're doing here today.

Back in March, when Durham council moved to remove the easements, denial, denial, denial was the McGuinty government's position with respect to the Duffins-Rouge lands. In response to our questions calling for the government to take action to maintain the easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stated this, and I'm quoting—I'll save you the quote. I see you looking at me there at the table.

"Let me repeat once again: The lands that are in the agricultural preserve in Pickering are part of the greenbelt. Whatever the city or town of Pickering does by way of resolution removing some designation on those lands is up to the town of Pickering. But quite frankly, the lands are still part of the greenbelt." That's taken from Hansard, March 7, 2005.

Then the minister went on to say, "I'm very pleased to tell this member and his caucus and everyone in this room and outside that we do have a permanent greenbelt; that the legislation that was passed is stronger than any other legislation we've ever had in this province."

I would say, there's clearly something wrong with this picture. The reason I'm sounding so strong—I will use that word on this issue—is because it bodes bad for future problems. It means that down the road, if the greenbelt was not able, as the ministers kept saying when questioned in this House, to protect these easements, then we're going to have more problems down the road. So I'm going to talk a bit about that. If the greenbelt legislation, as the minister said, is truly stronger than any legislation we've ever had in this province, then why now—why?—has the government deemed it necessary to introduce stand-alone legislation to further protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve? This is clearly contradictory.



I noticed that one of the members earlier, when I in a two-minute referred to this, got up and said, "Well, we don't really have to do this. It'll be protected, but we just want to make a strong statement here." Come on; give me a break. We're here because the greenbelt legislation does not protect these easements, and that's fine. I'm glad that we're here today with legislation and that finally, after all these months, with a lot of concern and a lot of worry, the government is taking action. But I have to say, therefore, that the government, if they really believe what they're saying, clearly doesn't understand the powers, or the lack of powers, of its own laws.

To further illustrate the statements made by the ministers at the time, the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet got in on the action too in a response to one of my questions. He stated, "I think the public is aware that we, the McGuinty government, have made it very clear that we'll do everything we can to protect the agricultural preserve.... The member will know that we have our greenbelt legislation; we have the minister's order on the agricultural preserve, which we believe will protect the agricultural preserve. So we're quite confident that we have the tools in place to ensure that that important property stays as an agricultural preserve." That's from Hansard, May 31, 2005. The Chair of Management Board went on to state, "We have taken the greenbelt legislation step. We have the minister's zoning order on it. We are convinced that this will provide and does provide adequate protection to ensure it stays as an agricultural preserve."

These statements and others want us to believe that the present regime, the Greenbelt Act and the ministerial zoning order, are sufficient for the full protection of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. But clearly, despite what a member over there said, who may want to withdraw that—it's just patently ridiculous—the introduction of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act is an admission by this government that the Greenbelt Act is not sufficient to protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

I'm going to get to my point here. I'm not just standing here and giving all these quotes—although there is some fun to it, I must admit, reminding the government of how strident and how clear they were several months ago in their responses to my appeal and my leader's appeal to do something about this. But I'm raising it because they have found out that in fact those protections, the Greenbelt Act and the ministerial orders, were not sufficient. I'm concerned about the implications and the impact, therefore, down the road on other easements in other situations. It is my fear that under development pressures, areas on the periphery of the greenbelt will eventually be removed from the greenbelt because its boundaries are not permanent, and they won't have their own act like Duffins-Rouge to protect them.

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Our fear that the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve was not adequately protected by the greenbelt legislation has now been shown to be the case. Of course, the

legislation today is vindication for those of us—I thought I was reading everything correctly. When you stand here in the House as an opposition member and you've read things carefully, you've consulted with experts and you stand here and you ask the ministers, you put the case to them, and you say: "Here's my understanding of this; here's my understanding of other experts," and they stand there so arrogant and pious in their answers—not even an "I'll take a look at that, because if you're correct, then we may have a problem"; it's, "No, no, no. Everything we've got in place will protect this."

I'm very concerned when those are the kinds of answers that I've gotten to every question I've asked about my concerns with the greenbelt legislation. It's, "Don't worry. The greenbelt is the greatest piece of legislation ever created in the universe"—I'm paraphrasing here, of course—"let alone the province," and, "Everything will be taken care of; don't you worry." That's the kind of response we get. Well, this is an indication and a vindication that in fact our concerns were correct. Again, I am glad to see that the government has come forward today with this piece of legislation to fix it, but it is just fixing one of the problems that the minister knows I have raised in this House.

The problem with the greenbelt has always been its lack of permanent boundaries, which leads to the reality—and I've talked a whole lot about this in here, and that the Minister of Citizenship, who's here today, if he were sitting over here with us in the opposition, I know he would agree with me, because I remember working hard with him, and he worked particularly hard; he was the critic. There were a lot more members, so he got to be the critic for the Oak Ridges moraine and, I have to say, did a tremendous job. We all acknowledge that.

**Interjection:** A great job.

**Ms. Churley:** He did: the salamander and—I did some work on it and did my bit, but Mike Colle, we have to hand it to him: When he was sitting over here on this side of the House in opposition—he wants me to read out his phone number now, but here's where we're going to stop, because now I'm going to say some bad things about him, because now that he's over there in government, he—

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** You set him up.

**Ms. Churley:** I did set him up. I know. Let me see if I can—oh, I see why he brought it up: "Save the Oak Ridges Moraine." That's how committed he is/was, MPP Mike Colle. I'll leave him to give his Web site and phone number: "Save the Oak Ridges Moraine."

But when I needed his support sitting on that side, in terms of making it clear to the government that this is a floating greenbelt, not the permanent greenbelt, and therefore has all kinds of problems that we need to fix, he was not standing there with me. Of course, now that—

**Interjection.**

**Ms. Churley:** Can I keep this pen? I like the pen.

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** That's a going-away gift.

**Ms. Churley:** He says, "That's a going-away gift." I'll get lots more of those in Ottawa.

But coming back to the greenbelt: Again, this is serious. It is serious. I know I'm joking around here, but I'm raising it in the context of having raised this issue about the easements and the greenbelt, not being able to protect it, and the ministerial order, not being able to protect it, and that there are going to be other situations. There are indeed other situations where, if there is not stand-alone legislation, we're going to have the same problem.

The government, you see, left the greenbelt boundaries malleable to political and development pressure. I'm going to be nice here today and not go into some of those dinners where developers paid thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars to have dinner with the then finance minister and the Premier while the greenbelt was being developed. I won't really go into that too much today, but we remember that. The boundaries have been left open for that kind of interference. There is nothing in the Greenbelt Act to stop the removal of 1,000 acres, say, from the southern boundary of the greenbelt, which has a lot of good, prime agricultural land and prime environmentally sensitive land, as long as an equal amount of land is added somewhere else where development pressures aren't as intense.

That is really critical, and I cannot get the government to acknowledge that. I find it frustrating, because it's a reality. It's real. You just have to read it. If you understand it, it is a floating greenbelt, and every time they stand up and say it is a permanent greenbelt, it is piffle, shall I say. I think I'm allowed to use that word. You can interpret it as you please, but it is not so, and it is a big problem. As you can understand, our concern here is that areas that are close to urban centres and under significant development pressure, such as the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, could potentially be removed and substituted within the greenbelt by lands elsewhere.

Why the government thought the greenbelt legislation adequate to protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve in the first place is quite a mystery, because it didn't take a whole lot of brain power to figure out that in fact it couldn't do that. Based on the government's position as extolled by the ministers I quoted earlier, the question I would like answered here today is, when and why did the government decide to reverse their position? When and why did the government determine that their greenbelt and the ministerial zoning order were insufficient, as we always said it was, to protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve? And in light of the need to introduce this act, will the government finally admit the serious flaw in the greenbelt legislation: the fact that it floats, that it is not permanent, and commit to amending the legislation to make the greenbelt boundaries fixed and permanent, as they say it is now? Will the government move today to amend the greenbelt legislation to make the greenbelt permanent?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** No.

**Ms. Churley:** The minister is saying no, but I have to ask; you never know. I had legislation. I guess it died on

the order paper when the House prorogued, but I put forward my own greenbelt legislation, which was permanent.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** But the acreage is there.

**Ms. Churley:** "But the acreage is there." You see, the minister gets that part of natural resources. He gets that part, but let's take it from there. The acreage is there, but you can move those acreages around.

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** You might need that flexibility.

**Ms. Churley:** He says you need that flexibility, and I say that's the problem, and you're going to have all kinds of problems down the road. But he says no; they're not going to do that.

The impermanency of the greenbelt boundaries is the lesson we can learn from the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve flip-flop. Again, I would call on the government today to make the greenbelt permanent, because the greenbelt is something I have always supported and continue to support. Who in their right mind—I know some of the Tories didn't support it, but who—I'll be careful here—in their right mind, wouldn't support—

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** Be nice.

**Ms. Churley:** No, I'm serious. Who wouldn't support green space? It's prime agricultural land.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** They want to pave over everything.

**Ms. Churley:** They do. We want to save it; they wanted to pave it. That's right.

To save prime agricultural land and environmentally sensitive land—of course we support it. It was absolutely critical, but we wanted the government to do what it said it was going to do, not create a floating—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. Churley:** They're having a little party over there. It's OK.

The greenbelt is a good thing. Unfortunately it's marred because this piece of it has not been fixed. That flexibility, as the minister puts it in a very positive light, to me means something else, not flexibility but that we could, down the road—and we're already seeing it, what people are calling leapfrog development, into Simcoe south. We're already seeing developers buying up all kinds of land in the area between, some of which has all kinds of good—even better agricultural land than what is preserved in the greenbelt. The McGuinty government has already approved, for instance, the big pipe, despite its significant impacts on the Oak Ridges moraine aquifer system, the Rouge River and its implications for further sprawl in the GTA. And where does the big pipe go? It goes right through the greenbelt. At this very moment, as we're debating this bill today, the government is poised—and it's sadly poised—to approve the Pine Valley extension that will run right through Boyd park, which, as the government knows, is an area of natural scientific interest. It too is an area inside the greenbelt.

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I have to say that this is all very sad, because it's a blight on the legacy they want to leave. Right now the general population has no idea that these kinds of things



are happening, as we speak, within the greenbelt. Most Ontarians believed the government when they were told the greenbelt would be a permanent, protected area and that features such as the headwaters of the Rouge River would be protected instead of being drained to facilitate the installation of the big pipe, which is starving creeks like Robinson Creek but which lines the pockets of Liberal-friendly developers, and that is what is going on. This is the sad part about the greenbelt, that these kinds of things are still going on.

I believe that this is not what Ontarians expected from the McGuinty government, nor do they even realize at this point that it's going on. You just have to ask the people who are being impacted right now by this kind of development that is going on within the greenbelt. You just have to talk to people from the Bond Head area and people from Bradford West Gwillimbury how the government is living up to its promise. They're still struggling, going to see government members and talking to me to try to stop that.

This area just north of the greenbelt is in Simcoe county. This, and I've described it many times in this House, has become the Wild West of development and land speculation since the government implemented the greenbelt. We're seeing situations where developers are offering and are paying municipalities for sewer upgrades. Those are the kinds of things that are happening now, as we speak about this bill today, which is a good bill.

But it's important for people to understand that, as we try to fix this one problem, there are all of these other things going on. It's a clear indication that the government's greenbelt is failing when it comes to living up to what they said it was going to do. One of the things they said it was going to do was stop urban sprawl. What we're seeing is what they call leapfrog development, all this land being bought up. We are seeing this big pipe being built that's going to generate a lot more urban sprawl in that area. Development continues to sprawl north of the greenbelt boundary despite what the government wants to pretend to be the case.

Then there's the development of major highways. Currently, the Minister of the Environment has on her desk the terms of reference for an environmental assessment—I just talked about that—that includes the development of the Pine Valley highway extension. Again, I mentioned that. I'm repeating it because I'm very, very upset about that, and so are the people in the area. This is going to go right through the greenbelt, through the heart of Boyd Park in Vaughan.

**The Acting Speaker:** I can't hear. There are conversations here. There is a conversation there that has been going on for at least 10 minutes. I would ask the members—please, it's very difficult to hear. It's extremely difficult with all the conversations.

Thank you very much. Please continue.

**Ms. Churley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure they all want to hear my speech, as I try to give some guidelines as to what I think should be done here. I know it's late in the day, and that to most people this is not a

really significant, important bill, when you think that it's just about easements. I understand that. So I'm not insulted, Mr. Speaker, but I know you do have to hear what I have to say in case I say something unparliamentary, and I'm not going to do that. You know I would never do that.

I want to go into a little bit more detail about the big pipe, because that's something I have a great deal of concern about, and that too is happening in the middle of the greenbelt area. I recently went to city hall—I believe you were going to come with me, Mr. Speaker, in your capacity as MPP, if you were available, but you weren't that day—to give a deputation to Toronto city council, which I did, along with a letter from Jack Layton, the member of Parliament for my riding of Toronto-Danforth, and of course the leader of the federal NDP.

Many, many deputants, including the Environmental Commissioner, came and spoke to city hall. The mayor was reluctant at first to get in the middle of this one, interfering with other jurisdictional matters. But he was convinced, as well as the members of city council, in particular after hearing from the Environmental Commissioner, I think, who raised alarm bells about the possible impacts on Toronto's and York's water if this big pipe goes ahead. They passed a resolution, which I have pieces of here, and I think it tells the whole story.

The works committee "recommended to the policy and finance committee that:

"(a) the city of Toronto oppose the current design and construction of the York Durham sanitary sewer trunk sewers and associated de-watering practices (present and future);

"(b) the city of Toronto request the province of Ontario through the Minister of Environment to:

"(i) deny approval to the 19th Avenue sewer which" goes through "the Oak Ridges moraine and sensitive aquifers, and that alternatives and local sewage solutions be explored as per the Minister of Environment's list of conditions; and

"(ii) refer the big pipe project description to the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for an assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act."

There are other clauses in this that the city council voted on and supported. I think that is something the government should be listening to. When its own Environmental Commissioner stands up and says—and I'll end on this note for today, Mr. Speaker, because I know we're coming to 6 o'clock. The Environmental Commissioner pointed out something very interesting: The Oak Ridges moraine—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Ms. Churley:** Just this last point and I'll be through for today: The Oak Ridges moraine is not included under the Environmental Bill of Rights, and this big pipe is within the Oak Ridges moraine. Therefore, if people who want the Environmental Commissioner to actually investigate this matter, he cannot do it because it is not

included. It's exempted, and the present Liberal government has not seen fit to include it under the Environmental Bill of Rights. He has expressed real frustration that his hands are tied in terms of doing what he is supposed to: his job as Environmental Commissioner and following up on these requests from the public to study this situation.

I have about another good half hour left of things to talk to you about, Mr. Speaker, but I think—

**Interjection:** You're doing a good job. Now sit down.

**Ms. Churley:** He's saying, "You're doing a good job. Now sit down." It being almost 6 of the clock, is it not, I will—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Churley:** The Speaker is telling me to keep going, but I'm going to end my speech for the day and the Speaker can end for today. Look, it's 6 o'clock.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Churley:** Mr. Speaker, should I end my speech for today?

**The Acting Speaker:** If you want to end your speech, you can, but that would be the end of the speech. You must continue until 6 o'clock.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I will tell you when it is 6. I will let you know precisely when it is 6.

**Ms. Churley:** Sorry, I don't mean to tell what you to do. I just know that when I used to be in your place in the Chair, sometimes I would accept—I'm not saying you should—it being almost 6 of the clock. I'm done for the day.

Until 6:00, it is very clear that I have other things to say about this. I have been expressing my concerns that, should the government not fix the problems with the greenbelt, because they have admitted by bringing this bill forward today, a special, stand-alone bill to protect these easements, that the greenbelt legislation and ministerial orders, which the minister previously said would fix this problem, will not work. What does that mean for other problems within the greenbelt? It means that, sadly, we're going to need—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Churley:** It is, really—I rarely complain about the din and noise around me, but this is actually ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. I have to tell you, I find it somewhat disrespectful. I don't care if people are listening, because I'm talking to people out there anyway, but I really do find it a bit disrespectful. I'm sorry; I know it's late in the day.

Anyway, I hope you're all back to hear the second half of my speech. Thank you very much for this opportunity today.

**The Acting Speaker:** It now being 6 of clock, orders of the day.

## ENDING MANDATORY RETIREMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS POUR ÉLIMINER LA RETRAITE OBLIGATOIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement / *Projet de loi 211, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne et d'autres lois pour éliminer la retraite obligatoire.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** For those who were not present this afternoon, it is upon unanimous consent that we will proceed beyond 6 o'clock today to deal with this item.

On the last occasion, it's my understanding that Mr. Hampton had the floor. Mr. Hampton not being present, we will call for further debate. Is there any further debate?

There being no further debate, Mr. Peters has moved second reading of Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There being more than five members, call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

I have a note here from the government whip. It's to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Minister Peters for the second reading of Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement, be deferred until Thursday, November 17, 2005."

It's signed by Mr. Levac, the chief government whip.

That being the case, and it being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*



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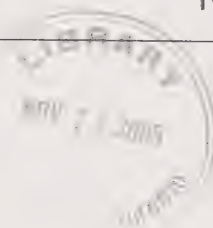




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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 17 November 2005

Jeudi 17 novembre 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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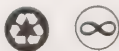
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 November 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD PRESERVATION ACT, 2005 LOI DE 2005 PRÉSERVANT LA PROPRIÉTÉ FAMILIALE DE FREDERICK BANTING

Mr. Wilson moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 20, An Act to ensure the preservation of the Frederick Banting homestead / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à assurer la préservation de la propriété familiale de Frederick Banting.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Wilson, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** I'm happy to rise and lead off debate on my private member's bill, the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act. Before I begin, I want to thank Helena Guergis, the federal member for Simcoe–Grey, for bringing to my attention the fact that the Ontario Historical Society had allowed the Banting homestead to go into disrepair. She is to be commended for her efforts to get everyone together just over a year ago. She held a press conference on the Banting homestead ground, and we began the fight to save this homestead. I also want to salute Bob and Peter Banting, Larry Keogh, Mike MacEachern, Alex Wright, Doug Curwood, Garnet Madill and all of those in Alliston and across the country who have given their support and who have worked so hard to preserve the memory of such a great Canadian.

Sir Frederick Banting was born on November 14, 1891. His birthplace is a farm in my hometown of Alliston. Canadians connect Sir Frederick Banting with the discovery of insulin. For this outstanding medical discovery, Dr. Banting was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1923—Canada's first. A noble man, he did not seek to profit from his achievement. Instead of applying for a patent, Banting transferred the rights for his life-saving serum to the University of Toronto for \$1. This magnanimous gesture ensured affordable insulin for millions of people suffering from the metabolic disorder known to

us as diabetes. His contributions to medicine were so immense that CBC viewers and listeners selected him as one of our top-10 greatest Canadians.

The purpose of my bill is to preserve Sir Frederick Banting's memory by safeguarding the buildings and property where he performed some of his earliest experiments. The home and buildings on Sir Frederick's Alliston farm are deteriorating. Earlier this week, I passed along to each member of this House some photos of one of the last remaining octagonal sheds in this country that sits on the Banting farm. By examining the photos, you will see how the shed looked in 1995 compared to now. More importantly, you will see the declining condition of a national historic site. I am sad to say that the homestead of this medical giant is almost in ruins, largely through Ontario Historical Society inaction.

Edward Banting, the last owner of the homestead, bequeathed the property to the society in 1999 on the understanding they would preserve and maintain it for the benefit of all Canadians and indeed the world. Unfortunately, they have failed to live up to that arrangement. In most countries, a birthplace of this national historic significance would be a shrine. Why have the so-called guardians of this heritage failed to preserve a national treasure—a treasure that's right here in our own backyard, a treasure that has been abandoned and permitted to fall into ruin?

My private member's bill underscores the spirit in which Edward Banting bequeathed his 100-acre property to the Ontario Historical Society. While he was alive, Edward had more than a dozen meetings with executive members of the society during which he expressed his wishes. Any reasonable person would immediately grasp the sense of Edward's bequest. He trusted the Ontario Historical Society to do what he had discussed with them. He counted on this more than 100-year-old organization with a well-established reputation for promoting and preserving Ontario history to maintain the homestead as a permanent memorial of a great Canadian.

Unfortunately, Edward was mistaken. The mission was clear, the terms were understood, yet the promise has been unfulfilled. Proud Canadians support our campaign now underway to fulfill this mission. That mission is essential if we are to respect and honour the Banting family and express the gratitude of 350 million insulin users worldwide.

The restoration has to begin now. It's time to repair the damage that six years of carelessness have caused. It's time to restore those buildings and it's time to protect the property from potential vandalism and further wear-

ing away. In the words of the Banting family, the Ontario Historical Society has misled their membership and the public. Though Sir Frederick Banting lived on the farm until he entered the University of Toronto medical school, they say it was not his home. What nonsense. Because the family remodelled the farmhouse, they say it isn't the original home where he was born. They say the farmhouse was in disrepair when they were given the property in 1999, an opinion that's contradicted by the photos. At that time, Edward's daughter, Marie, was living in the house and maintaining the property in a very reasonable manner. Since assuming title, the Ontario Historical Society has condoned a level of deterioration that no self-respecting homeowner would ever permit.

The society asserts that in addition to the free gift of this historic 100-acre farm, Edward should have given them an endowment for its upkeep. They conveniently forget to tell the public and their membership that a local potato grower pays rent on that farm and generates income for the farm of between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year. What has the historical society done with that? That's more than enough money to pay for the utilities and the taxes, and it's a pretty good endowment by anyone's standard to maintain and enhance the buildings on that property.

Why has the property had to endure six years of neglect under the hands of the Ontario Historical Society—six lost years? The homestead was placed in the trust of a group that is overseeing the destruction of a legacy—a legacy for people with diabetes, the Bantings, Canadians, the world and indeed our local residents of New Tecumseh. The Banting family are appalled with the mismanagement of this historic property, and I share that frustration. I know all members of this House will share that frustration.

My bill, if passed, imposes a restrictive covenant on the property. It prohibits the erection of any new structures. It also prohibits the destruction of the current structures that are on the property and allows for only maintenance or repair to those buildings. They certainly will not be allowed to tear down the buildings that are there. It allows the Minister of Culture to send inspectors in to make sure that the buildings are being maintained and that the Ontario Historical Society is living up to the trust the people of Ontario place in that organization.

Initially, my bill was just to signal our determination to save this historic property. I was hoping—and we had meetings. In fact, unfortunately, the last meeting was a year ago. We had a number of meetings. The Deputy Minister of Culture was trying to negotiate a deal between the town of New Tecumseh, the Banting family, the Banting educational committee and the Ontario Historical Society. Unfortunately, no deal was to be had. A year later, we have to go the legislative route and use this legislative hammer.

1010

I want to conclude by reading one of the letters that I've received. This one is from Harvey Cuff, the chairperson of the Banting Historical Trust in Musgrave Har-

bour, Newfoundland. As you know, that's where Dr. Banting's plane crashed during the Second World War. He's a war hero, in addition to being the discoverer of insulin and many other inventions, frankly. It says,

"Dear Mr. Wilson,

"On behalf of the Banting Historical Trust Inc., I am writing this letter in support of protecting and preserving the historic property of the Banting farm/homestead in Alliston, Ontario.

"It was on a mission to England that Sir Frederick Banting's plane crashed 10 miles inland from Musgrave Harbour, Newfoundland, during World War II. Local hunters, led by a search plane from Gander, located the wreckage. The bodies of Sir Frederick and crew members William Snailham and William Bird were taken to the Orange Lodge in Musgrave Harbour. The pilot, Joseph Mackey, survived.

"This ill-fated crash has always been a part of our history and considered a fascinating and intriguing story. In 1991, the wreckage of the plane was airlifted to the Banting Memorial Municipal Park and an interpretation centre was built next to the plane. In 2001, the 60th anniversary of the tragic crash, the Banting Historical Trust was successful in getting funding to have a replica of the plane (a Hudson Bomber) rebuilt and a monument put on the site for the men who died in the crash. The interpretation centre displays artifacts of the plane and tells the story of the life and death of Dr. Frederick Banting, who in 2004 was given the honour of fourth place by fellow Canadians as Canada's greatest hero.

"The site, since it opened in 1991, has received more than 50,000 visitors from around the world. There are so many people living with diabetes who would not be with us today if not for Dr. Banting's discovery of insulin. Visitors have expressed an outpouring of emotional gratitude for Dr. Banting's work and life-saving discovery....

"The Banting Historical Trust Inc. wholeheartedly supports and encourages the Sir Frederick Banting Educational Committee in their efforts in securing this property and their plan to form a foundation for the preservation of the buildings and conversion of the fields to a camp for diabetic youth. What a wonderful inspiration and legacy for the co-discoverer of insulin, of which without insulin many of these children would not be with us today."

That's from Harvey Cuff, the chairperson of Banting Historical Trust in Musgrave Harbour.

I would ask all members to support this bill today. It's unfortunate that the Ontario Historical Society, which receives \$242,000 in grant money from the Ministry of Culture, has failed to live up to their mandate and to their promise to the people of Ontario to preserve and enhance national historic properties such as this. The property is worth a lot of money. Apparently, the historical society is more interested in money than in saving this national historic site.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** It is indeed a pleasure to rise today and speak to this bill. I want to thank the member for Simcoe-Grey for bringing this issue forward to the House. It's an important one.



I think everybody here knows that I'm the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture. Heritage is very near and dear to my heart, not just my portfolio, and it is for many, many reasons.

I think what we need to reiterate for those who maybe are not quite familiar with the exact contribution that was made by Sir Frederick Banting—I know it has just been outlined, but we can't say it enough. We know the name Banting. We know the term "insulin." We know what it does for diabetics. But we have to go over what exactly was the contribution he made. It was unique; it was special.

Sir Frederick Banting was born and grew up on a farm in Alliston, Ontario. He became Canada's first Nobel Prize winner for his discovery of insulin, but he did not profit from this monumental discovery. He gave the rights to the University of Toronto to keep insulin affordable and to further medical research. That in itself is an extraordinary contribution, because we know that since the discovery of insulin, since it came into common use, millions and millions of lives have been made worthwhile, in fact have been saved, through the use of insulin. Many people would have otherwise died of diabetes. So his contribution is absolutely enormous, not just to the history of Ontario or Canada but internationally. This is a worldwide historical figure.

As I mentioned, heritage and history are close to my heart. It is the importance not just of the stories of the people who came before us, how they lived, how we got to where we are now, but it is often their legacies. The legacy of Sir Frederick Banting and his contribution is a living legacy. It is a life-giving legacy. It is an inspirational story that must be told again and again. Clearly, one of the ways that we tell these inspirational stories is through the places where part of the story perhaps took place. In this case, part of the story of Sir Frederick Banting took place in Alliston, Ontario, on a 100-acre farm. It's not the original Banting homestead. It's not the original home where Banting was born. That has been replaced. However, it is that sense of place that is still there, and that tremendously important piece of international history took place there.

That is why our government passed amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. For decades, we had been watching important heritage properties in our province be destroyed, demolished, whether they were built heritage or natural heritage. We have watched those properties be destroyed, and there has been tremendous demand for three decades now for changes to the Ontario Heritage Act that would give tools to municipalities to help protect these important heritage properties. Previously, municipalities could only delay the demolition of an important heritage site by 180 days; they could not prevent it. We have now, through our changes to the Ontario Heritage Act, provided municipalities and communities with the tools they need to permanently protect heritage buildings. And that is why I am strongly urging the municipality to continue with the process that they are engaged in right now with the Ontario Historical Society to come to an

agreement that will preserve and celebrate the history of this tremendously important place.

And I have to reiterate at this point the fact that heritage makes our communities incredibly vital and also viable. There is a tremendous economic benefit to historical and heritage sites. They bring tourists, they provide education, and they often provide communities where people want to live and want to congregate, because they tend to be very beautiful. You've all heard me say this in the House before, and my minister has said it very well: She says, "People do not come to see a strip mall; they come to see history, heritage, beautiful buildings, beautiful architecture."

If you have ever been to Europe, you know that when you step into the streets of many European cities the history is tangible. They're beautiful places because they have recognized their heritage. They have preserved it and celebrated it, and they bring people from all over the world there to see it. So there is also that economic benefit. You make a stronger community when you celebrate and protect your heritage.

While I fully support the spirit of this bill, I do feel our government has provided the tools for the communities to solve this problem. We know the negotiations are still going on right now, and we would like to see the community resolve this issue. We do have a couple of things, and I want to just outline what can take place here. There are two better mechanisms for long-term protection, because although I say the spirit of Bill 20 is great, it could make restoration a little bit difficult. It makes it difficult to establish a future use for this site, just because there might be alteration required. We'd like to leave a little bit of flexibility in there, because in the past there was difficulty if we were too restrictive. We need to have some flexibility in there so that the site can be used in special ways.

The OHS could work with the town now to register a heritage easement on the title of the property, which would require the current and all future owners to ensure the upkeep of the farm. That can be done in a specific way. More commonly, the town of New Tecumseth could designate the property under part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Such a designation could ensure upkeep but at the same time be tailored to meet the needs of each farm building by identifying all the parts in the appropriate municipal bylaw. It could also allow for future uses, perhaps as a camp for children, as has been suggested, and establish minimum maintenance standards. It could be made as restrictive as need be without impacting future uses. An adaptive reuse is really, really important if we are going to make the maintenance and preservation of our heritage buildings viable well into the future.

Also, a designation may be applied without the approval of the OHS, so if the municipality felt sufficiently strongly about the situation, it can just go ahead and designate it as a heritage property, and then the heritage act kicks in and we protect that property. The town simply has to use the powers the province has already given it, since the Ontario Heritage Act already makes it



possible to protect the Banting farm from alteration and even demolition.

Decisions regarding the use of the Banting farm should be made, though. We feel fairly strongly these negotiations should continue. We do have a commitment from the OHS that the roof is to be repaired. Apparently there was a failed attempt at this earlier, for a number of reasons, so it has lasted a little longer, but they have given us their assurance this is going to go ahead immediately.

Once again, I want to thank the member for Simcoe-Grey for bringing this forward, for bringing this to light, and for giving us all the opportunity, once again, to understand the incredible contribution that Sir Frederick Banting has made to generations and generations of human beings and will continue to make to the lives of people. I just want to reiterate the importance of his birthplace, its value emotionally, its value historically and its value economically. That has to be recognized, and I encourage the town to recognize that as well. Thank you very much to the member for Simcoe-Grey for bringing this forward.

1020

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm pleased to join in the debate. Certainly, I'm in support of Bill 20, brought forth by my colleague—senior colleague, I should say—from Simcoe-Grey. It's called An Act to ensure the preservation of the Frederick Banting homestead. I just want to commend Mr. Wilson and Ms. Guergis, the MP for this area, with respect to their bringing this important issue to the attention of the community. Certainly maintaining heritage properties as a point of principle is something that we should respect in this province.

I know my own constituency office was a former assembly area, armoury, in the late 1890s and early 19th century with respect to training of Canadian forces. It unfortunately was allowed to deteriorate. At the time I was elected in 1995, I chose to take on that building to maintain it, because it was not being maintained, even though it was a city of Barrie building, and bring it up to the standard that it should be as a historical site. That's why I take a strong interest with respect to this bill in terms of maintaining and protecting our heritage properties, because once they're gone, they're gone forever and you can't look back and say, "Well, we should have done this." This is an opportunity to do something constructive.

This is a 100-acre piece of property. I believe it's zoned agricultural, but it's surrounded by residential home development, and a developer, from what I understand, is interested in purchasing that property. There's no doubt why they would be interested in it, because as everybody knows in this Legislature and as my senior colleague Mr. Wilson knows, Simcoe county was not covered by the greenbelt legislation. The greenbelt legislation, because it doesn't apply to Simcoe county, has led to intensification, an incredible search for land, an incredible search to get developable land. Certainly New

Tecumseth, which is the home of Honda, is an area that is going to be targeted for growth. Certainly being able to get land in an area that can be developed, such as the property where the Banting homestead is, has proven to be a big issue. I believe that if the greenbelt legislation had applied to Simcoe county, it could be applied to protect that particular piece of property, because it is agricultural land. What we have is mass intensification and a tremendous amount of activity by groups that want land to develop. This is why my senior colleague from Simcoe-Grey has come forth with this bill, because something has to be done now. You cannot just sit idly by. He has worked diligently. He has also set in course a procedure that will hopefully be adopted by the House today where we can get expedited committee hearings and also an expedited process to bring this piece of legislation into law.

It's a restrictive covenant to protect the property, and it has to be acted on, I would say, not only to preserve the buildings—because when you look at the buildings in the pictures that were provided by Mr. Wilson, they show that the property has just gone into deterioration. It's just not acceptable for a heritage property to be left in ruins the way it is. If you have a property and it's put in trust to you, you have to maintain that property. Otherwise, you shouldn't have taken it on in the first place. So what we have here are buildings that are not being maintained. We have, no doubt, a valuable piece of property here, because of the fact that the Liberals' greenbelt legislation has sort of worked in reverse effect in Simcoe county. There's an intensification of people looking for land. This is a prime parcel of land in New Tecumseth because of the fact that it's an attractive area to develop.

We have a situation here that has to be addressed immediately, it has to be addressed responsibly and it has to be addressed in a manner that is going to respect the family and respect probably one of the great Canadian citizens and a great humanitarian—Frederick Banting.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I have to say that this is one of those bills that anybody who has ever taken a step back and looked at an historic building or an historic site, anybody who has owned an historic building or been living near an historic site or anybody who has participated in any way in the preservation of either buildings or properties that are significant in our collective historic past and tried to save those gems for the future would say is a no-brainer.

This particular homestead, this particular site, is extremely important and is one of the symbols of the kind of people this country has produced who have gone on to do some wonderful things for humankind as a whole. I don't think it's necessary to go into a long history lesson as to the contributions of Sir Frederick Banting, or Dr. Frederick Banting. Suffice it to say that anybody who has been touched by the disease of diabetes—and it's recognized that diabetes is a disease that is on the rise, particularly in young people—knows how important Banting's discovery of insulin is in the management of that illness. It's unfortunate that so many people who are touched by



this disease end up in serious medical situations. Unfortunately, that remains a problem to this day: People lose limbs as a result of gangrene and other complications of diabetes that are not treated effectively or properly.

I have to say that when you look at the opportunity that's before us to make sure that the place of residence, the homestead, of Dr. Frederick Banting is preserved, I think it's incumbent upon us to make sure that that happens. There is a time on Thursday mornings when we talk about issues that are not really partisan in nature but are more co-operative, things that can get done that are not about your party or your platform but more about the real issues that face communities, the real issues that face Ontarians, the real opportunities we have to make some differences.

I think this is one of those where some might say, "Well, it's a homestead. It's an historic site. What's the big deal?" But it is a big deal. If we don't take the time to preserve our history, if we don't take the time to acknowledge and recognize and celebrate the contributions of people who have done so many great things, and if we don't do that in a way that will last into future generations, then we really do lose a bit of our collective understanding of who we are as a community, who we are as a province, who we are as a nation.

1030

I really think that this bill brought forward by the member for Simcoe-Grey is one that gives us an opportunity not only to acknowledge the work of Dr. Banting but also the work of the people in the community who are trying to make sure, through volunteer efforts and volunteer hours, through the sheer love of history and sheer desire, that we don't lose these kinds of really significant homesteads or sites. For their sake, we need to make sure that this bill is unanimously supported.

It's a bill that in effect preserves this site, that says that as a province we're committed to preserving this site. We want to see this site exist not only now but well into the future. We want to make sure that the sheer neglect that happens when you don't make positive efforts, particularly with historic sites, doesn't happen, that we don't get to a situation of erosion and of deterioration of the site.

Like anyone knows, it's that old adage, "a stitch in time saves nine"; in other words, let's make sure we're doing everything we can do right now and on an ongoing, regular basis to take care of this piece of property. If you don't do it now, if another six years goes by, and another six years after that, and nothing is done to make sure this site is preserved, we're going to turn around one day and it's not going to be there any more. It will be the collective shame of the members of this Legislature and everyone else who could possibly have lent a hand in the preservation of this site.

I'm happy to be able to support this bill. I really do laud the member for bringing it forward. I actually own right now an historic property. I'm in the process, probably—I'm definitely in the process of selling it at this point in time, mostly because I don't have the time to keep up with the darn thing. It's a property that was built

in Hamilton in the 1850s. It's called the Stone Terrace. It's one section of a commercial street frontage that has living space above and commercial space below. It's a fabulous, fabulous building.

Unfortunately, as I said, I really don't have the time to keep up with it, nor the money, to be honest with you, because they can be money pits, for sure. But it's a gorgeous piece of property. I've been really honoured to be able to hold on to a piece of history the way I have for the last several years, but I recognize that I don't have the opportunity. I'm extremely busy with serving my constituents and serving in this Legislature, and I recognize that it deserves the love, the care and the attention that it can only get from someone who has got the time to put into it. That, unfortunately, can no longer be me, so I'm selling that property to a couple of people who I know will take very good care of it.

Similarly, although this is not a sale of property, this is an acknowledgment that if it's not being taken care of, this historic site has to be enshrined in legislation. The preservation of this site has to be enshrined in legislation to ensure that in the future it is taken care of, it is properly maintained and all of the upkeep is stayed on top of; otherwise, these buildings can deteriorate extremely quickly, and these properties can very quickly become problems, and very expensive ones.

I was really pleased when I received the package of background materials on this site that the member provided. It's too bad there is no opportunity for us to be able to hold up the pictures and let people see exactly what it is that we're dealing with here. The buildings in this package of photographs are quite interesting—an octagonal implement shed. In fact, some of the pictures show the deterioration of that very shed. It's a very unique structure and quite an interesting building.

I've had the pleasure of working with people in Hamilton who are interested in architectural and historical preservation. They are a very passionate group of people and they are very concerned that in our haste to build and create new structures and change the utilization of land, we're going to lose some very significant and very beautiful buildings. I know that the people in Hamilton are no different than the people in every other community who are interested in the architectural and historical preservation of lands and buildings. They acknowledge, they recognize and they treasure, and they try to convince the rest of us that these pieces of property and these buildings are pieces of history that should be treasured and need to be valued. And we can't just do that in words, we need to do that in action.

If anybody has ever had the privilege of travelling to Europe, for example, there's history no matter where you turn. But those buildings in Europe that we all look at in pictures, or for those of us who have had the opportunity to be in Europe, we're awestruck when we get there and see the history, the gorgeous buildings, the beautiful artwork and the frescoes inside and outside. It's amazing when you go there, but it's not amazing by accident. It's amazing because these cultures, these communities and these countries have spent a lot of time and effort and



have huge restoration and maintenance budgets for these beautiful, architecturally significant buildings.

That is something we've lost in many of our older communities. I know that even in the community I'm from, we have constant struggles and we're in constant anxiety about the loss of historical sites. In fact, there's one that's currently on the radar in Hamilton and that's a building called the Lister Block, which was in fact the very first indoor mall in all of Canada. That is a downtown site that is deteriorating significantly and has been doing so for decades now. It's extremely unfortunate. There are two concerns: One is that the longer it deteriorates, the less likely anybody's ever going to have the money to bring it back to where it should be, and secondly, because of the state of the building—it's right in our downtown—it causes concern for people.

I'm going to leave a few minutes for my colleague Gilles Bisson to say a few words about this bill, but I really do support it. It's the right thing to do. I think opportunities to save these buildings and to respect and acknowledge the value of the contribution of people like Sir Frederick Banting cannot be missed.

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to rise in support of the bill of my honourable colleague the member from Simcoe-Grey, Jim Wilson, on the preservation of the Sir Frederick Banting homestead. I will say that it's a fine thing he's doing. The preservation of this home in his riding is significant.

I want to tell you that I'm fortunate to have a descendant of the Banting family in my riding of Niagara Falls. He's an exceptional dental surgeon in my community. His name is Ron, the great-nephew of Dr. Frederick Banting. Because of that, I've had the opportunity to sit with him and a number of his family members to really get a personal insight of the significance and importance of this bill. The quest of the Banting family is to honour their great-uncle and to advance the well-being of those who fight against the terrible disease of diabetes. In fact, I have two members of my family who are affected by diabetes, so I know first-hand the consequences of it.

At the outset of the debate on the bill, there are two things that should be made clear. The family itself has never profited and does not want to profit by this bill. It's a bill to preserve and protect the heritage and to recognize the discoverer of insulin. In fact, Ron's brother, Bob, and others—again, I've met Bob Banting—have invested countless hours in an attempt to preserve the legacy and discovery of insulin.

1040

For the people who are watching, the 100-acre farm was left in trust to the Ontario Historical Society by Edward Banting, and that was after many, many meetings to explain to the historical association what this bequest meant. It appears, sad to say, that the Ontario Historical Society has different objectives from those envisioned by Sir Frederick Banting.

It's felt by the supporters of the Banting homestead that it's obvious that the Ontario Historical Society has a very different objective, and that is their own financial

survival; that's job number one. This is sad. If they sell the property, and there are suggestions of that, to reduce their debt and to finance operations, what's going to remain? Are they going to sell it and we're going to see a subdivision there? I think most of us can reflect back on our own communities and have seen some of those situations happen. I can tell you that in my own community of Niagara Falls we just recently lost Loretto monastery, a magnificent historical facility. In fact, I was there the day they had an open house and walked through it with thousands of people. A lot of tears were shed; a lot of stories were told. It will be forever lost and forever missed in our community.

The family strongly feels that Sir Frederick Banting was never about money and they constantly tell me that. In fact it's been said, and it's important to say again, that he could have made millions of dollars from the discovery of insulin but he didn't. In fact, it was determined in a deed that no one would ever profit from the discovery of insulin. Who would do that in this day and age?

The farm was important in the development of insulin. Without Dr. Banting's farming experience, the original supplies of insulin would not have been made or would have been more difficult to obtain.

Unfortunately, our lifestyles and diet choices are now showing that diabetes is growing, almost to a very staggering, significant situation. However, supporters of this are really interested in juvenile diabetes and envision at some point the development of a camp for juvenile diabetics. These unfortunate young people need the support of their peers—and that's who we are today, their peers—and we have an opportunity to support a significant bill.

As most people know, there are some very significant things about Dr. Banting. Of course, we know he grew up on a farm in Alliston. He became the first Canadian Nobel Prize winner, for the discovery of insulin. He didn't profit from this discovery. He gave the rights to the University of Toronto to keep insulin affordable and to further medical research into the discovery, which has saved millions of lives across the world of people who, without insulin, would have died from diabetes.

The preservation of this homestead and its development for humanitarian purposes related to diabetes is essential. Sir Frederick Banting and the Banting family would have wanted it this way, and this House shouldn't want it any other way either.

I have two articles from the newspaper; I want to quickly read them. One says, "A Nobel Home, Neglected." It has a picture of Bob Banting standing in front of the home. Although it's not a prop and may not be clear, it shows what disrepair this home is now found in. The other one says, "Family Fights to Save Banting Home."

I want to again congratulate the member from Simcoe-Grey. I urge all the members in the House to support this bill. It's a significant bill and a great opportunity to show that this House cares about history and about preserving it. I again commend the member for bringing this bill forward.



**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** It's my pleasure to rise today and speak in support of Bill 20, An Act to ensure the preservation of the Frederick Banting homestead, brought forward by the member for Simcoe–Grey.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member on bringing forward this private member's bill, which deals with an issue very close to the hearts of his constituents. This member is certainly one of the hardest-working members of this House. He is motivated by high principles and high values, which he acquired from his family, and he makes a conscious and deliberate effort to apply those values and principles to his day-to-day work in this Legislature.

I'm proud to say that I share a few things in common with the member for Simcoe–Grey. We were both born in the same week of the same month of the same year, and we were elected to serve our constituents here in this Legislature at the same time in 1990. I am honoured to have had the chance to work with the member throughout our time here in the House. It was his honour to serve as our Minister of Health during a very challenging time shortly after our party formed the government in 1995. He did a tremendous job in that role.

The bill that this member brings forward today shows his ongoing commitment to his constituents in Simcoe–Grey. The Frederick Banting homestead is the birthplace and home of one of Canada's all-time greatest physicians. In 1923, as has been pointed out, Dr. Banting discovered insulin—a landmark medical discovery that changed the lives of millions of people around the world who suffered from diabetes. He was later recognized for his achievements when he won the Nobel Prize for medicine, the first Canadian to win this prestigious award.

Dr. Banting then made a selfless and honourable decision. After devoting his life's work to helping those suffering from diabetes, which prior to the discovery often meant a death sentence, he made sure that insulin would help humankind for decades and even centuries to come. Instead of trying to profit from his fundamental and ground-breaking discovery, Dr. Banting chose to sell the rights to his life-saving serum to the University of Toronto for the princely sum of \$1. This courageous decision ensured that diabetes sufferers around the world would have access to affordable insulin. At the time of Dr. Banting's discovery, Canada was considered by many to be a backwater of the British Empire, often ignored and forgotten by the world. Who could have imagined that a Toronto-based Canadian researcher would make such an important and life-saving discovery that was eluding the rest of the world?

This is why the bill brought forward by the member for Simcoe–Grey is so important. This bill seeks to preserve the Frederick Banting homestead, located near Alliston, Ontario, which serves as a constant reminder of the achievements of Dr. Banting. Unfortunately, the home and buildings on this property, as has been pointed out, are deteriorating, and are in some danger of being destroyed should the land be sold for development.

Currently, the Frederick Banting homestead is the property of the Ontario Historical Society, donated to the society in 1999 by Dr. Banting's nephew, Edward Banting. It was the hope of Edward Banting that the society would maintain the property and buildings and help preserve the memory of his distinguished uncle. Sadly, to date, this has not been the case. The homestead and surrounding property have deteriorated badly after being neglected and poorly maintained for the past six years. Understandably, Dr. Banting's family and the larger community feel let down by the Ontario Historical Society's failure to properly maintain this historical landmark.

The member for Simcoe–Grey has introduced this bill in order to preserve and protect the Frederick Banting homestead, which is a symbol of the momentous achievements of this Canadian hero. In fact, the viewers and listeners of the CBC recently recognized him as one of our top 10 greatest Canadians of all time. It is my hope that this bill passes second reading in this House so that the Legislature can make a statement that they care about this very important Canadian historical site. It is our opportunity as members to signal to the government that steps must be taken to preserve this valuable landmark.

Since we're talking about insulin, I think it's appropriate to make reference to the private member's bill brought forward by the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North in the previous session of the current Parliament: Bill 55, the Health Insurance Amendment Act, intended to help pay for insulin pumps for diabetics. This is a bill that I supported as well. I received a great deal of positive feedback from my constituents on it. I hope that the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North will continue to advocate for this idea in the balance of the current Parliament. He would continue to enjoy my support if he did so.

I look forward to hearing the contributions of other members of this House on this important bill and would encourage everyone to support Bill 20.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James):** Je voudrais prendre cette occasion pour dire que le caucus néo-démocratique va suivre et supporter la motion qui était mise par notre collègue M. Wilson. On pense que cette motion a beaucoup de bon sens. Premièrement, M. Banting a fait une contribution non seulement dans la société canadienne mais aussi dans la société de notre planète avec sa découverte, qu'aujourd'hui 350 millions de personnes à travers le monde en bénéficient et sont en vie grâce à ce monsieur-là. Imaginez-vous que vous, un individu, êtes capable d'influencer la santé du monde de la manière dont il l'a fait avec sa découverte. C'est vraiment quelque chose de fantastique et, franchement, quelque chose qui est parfois dur à comprendre.

**1050**

Le problème est simplement celui-ci. Son domicile, là où il est né, est présentement en danger de savoir exactement ce qui va arriver. Le neveu de M. Banting avait donné cet édifice, la propriété, à la société historique de la région. C'était un défi un peu trop difficile pour eux autres. Ils ont eu des problèmes à être capables de garder



en place tout ce qui est nécessaire pour garantir que la terre et le bâtiment sur cette terre demeurent en bonne condition pour l'utiliser comme site historique et pour attirer, premièrement, des touristes, mais deuxièmement, pour célébrer la vie de M. Banting.

Sur ce point-là, M. Wilson amène devant nous une motion qui dit qu'on va créer une autre société à but non lucratif pour être capable de donner la capacité à eux autres de faire ce qu'ils doivent faire pour s'assurer que ce bâtiment reste là où il est et en bon état, et qu'on peut célébrer, à travers cet édifice, la vie de M. Banting et aussi la découverte qu'il a faite.

C'est intéressant de dire qu'au Canada, parfois on n'est pas bien « smart » quand ça vient à trouver des manières à reconnaître l'histoire de notre pays. On le sait, ceux qui ont eu la chance de faire des voyages autour du monde. Moi-même, j'ai fait l'Europe, l'Asie, l'Afrique et d'autres places. Spécialement l'Afrique, et je dois dire l'Europe, n'ont pas seulement une histoire très longue, mais ils y arrivent d'une manière un peu différente quand ça vient à promouvoir l'histoire de leur pays. Par exemple, si on va à Paris, si on va à Bruxelles, si on va à Londres, si on va à Venise, l'histoire est représentée d'une telle manière que le public peut le comprendre et peut le voir. Par exemple, si on a la chance d'aller à Londres et on se promène dans les rues, il va y avoir une pancarte qui dit qu'à cette place, à telle ou telle date, telle ou telle affaire est arrivée pour telle ou telle personne.

On prend en Europe, je pense, une meilleure manière d'apprécier, premièrement, l'histoire de son pays, mais aussi de la présenter d'une manière pour qu'elle vive dans la société d'aujourd'hui. Si j'ai quelque chose à dire sur ce point, c'est que le Canada a une histoire très riche, une histoire qui date des milliers d'ans, parce qu'on sait que les communautés autochtones étaient ici avant nous. On a besoin de prendre, je pense, l'habitude de mieux reconnaître, premièrement, qu'on a une bonne histoire et, deuxièmement, de la présenter d'une manière que, à la fin de la journée, on peut en être fiers, on peut la voir, on peut la vivre, et on peut célébrer ce que c'est d'être Canadiens.

Je pense que cette motion en est une partie, parce que M. Banting a joué un rôle important dans l'histoire du Canada. On doit le célébrer, on doit s'en souvenir, et c'est pour cette raison qu'on va supporter cette motion.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I'm pleased to stand in the House today and speak in support of the bill presented by the member from Simcoe–Grey. The member has worked in the Legislature during the last session and this one to preserve the birthplace of a monumental figure in Canadian history. Not only is the member from Simcoe–Grey committed to conserving the historic site of the Frederick Banting homestead, but he has taken the time and energy to consult the Sir Frederick Banting Educational Committee and the descendants of Sir Banting himself in the process of writing this bill.

I think all members of the House can learn from the way this bill was drafted. As representatives of our respective ridings, we are here on behalf of the thousands

of Ontarians living in our communities, and sometimes we must stand up to well-established, province-wide organizations to protect the rights and properties within our community.

Many community members in New Tecumseth have been discouraged as they witness the disrepair and declining state of the Banting family home. There had been much speculation that the Ontario Historical Society intends to sell sections of the property for other purposes, and there has been much turmoil as a result of public statements from the Ontario Historical Society. This organization has implied that the generous donation of the homestead from the family of Sir Banting was not enough and that they required an additional endowment fund to maintain the property.

In spite of the ill will surrounding this home, there is hope in this commendable bill. This is a home that deserves to be a celebrated tourist destination and educational historic site. The success of the bill offers a solution to the citizens of New Tecumseth and to history buffs worldwide. The bill would promptly address the poor condition of the home and work proactively to prevent any further damage to the property. It gives due recognition to a man who was rightfully listed among the greatest Canadians.

This Monday, November 14, was Sir Frederick Banting's birthday, a date that is now recognized as World Diabetes Day. As well, each year the Canadian Diabetes Association celebrates November 6 as Sir Frederick Banting Day.

There are countless reasons why we should respect the memory of Sir Frederick Banting through preservation of his childhood home. It is fitting that Remembrance Day falls between the two days designated in his honour by the Canadian Diabetes Association and the world diabetes association.

Not only was Sir Frederick Banting an incredible mind in the world of medicine and a generous soul who forfeited all the possible profits from the patent to his life-changing drug, insulin, doing this so that insulin could be affordable treatment for all those afflicted with the disease, but Dr. Banting was also a courageous war hero. We have the opportunity to preserve the home of a Nobel Prize-winning doctor, a doctor who was also a Military Cross recipient for his service during the First World War. After establishing himself as a leader in medicine in the 1920s, Banting did not rest on his laurels. His patriotism and dedication to military service continued. He was a liaison officer for the North American and British medical services when the Second World War began. Before he succumbed to his own injuries from an air disaster in that war, Banting was sure to dress the wounds of the pilot of the aircraft in which he was flying.

Today, as members of the House, we have the chance to keep the memory of this incredible man alive. In 1923, this Legislature endowed the Banting and Best chair of medical research. Now, over 80 years later, we have a chance in this House to preserve the memory of this revolutionary doctor's childhood home.



As you know, diabetes continues to affect the lives of thousands of Ontarians, many of whom could not possibly lead a normal, healthy life without insulin, which was discovered in 1920 by Sir Frederick Banting and Charles H. Best.

Last spring, the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North introduced a bill that recognizes the contemporary reality of the disease that is diabetes and would provide insulin pumps to diabetics under the Ontario health care program.

The member from Simcoe–Grey is bringing forth a bill that will assist the public history of our province and our country. In preserving the Banting homestead, there is the potential to bring the legacy of Dr. Banting to the forefront of people's minds.

Although there are tens of thousands of Canadians living with diabetes, this is not an unproblematic affliction. Diabetes is a contributing factor in the deaths of approximately 40,500 Canadians each year.

The homestead, established almost 115 years ago, was bequeathed in good faith by the Banting family to the Ontario Historical Society in 1999. The family did so with the intention of preserving Sir Frederick Banting's legacy to share with all Canadians. Our own Minister of Culture said recently that "For too many years, our heritage resources have been left vulnerable." This is all too true and proven by the current state of the Banting homestead.

I hope that the success of this bill will reverse the years of damage incurred to the property and that the bill can someday provide an educational and recreational resource for the hundreds of thousands of proud Canadians who wish to honour the memory of Sir Frederick Banting.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Wilson, have you two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Wilson:** I want to thank the member from Stoney Creek for her kind comments, and my colleagues from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford, Hamilton East, Niagara Falls, Waterloo–Wellington, Timmins–James Bay and Laurie Scott, who just spoke.

The Ontario Historical Society, frankly, duped Edward Banting. He had over a dozen meetings with them in the three years before he died in 1998, and by the time the will was done, in 1999, the Ontario Historical Society received title as a result of Edward Banting transferring title to them. Perhaps he made a mistake. Perhaps it should have gone to the Ontario Heritage Foundation, which raises money to preserve and enhance historical properties like the Banting homestead. But what's done is done.

As was said, the homestead is probably worth about \$2.5 million. There are some 300 homes being built around it right now by Mattamy developers. The fact of the matter is that it needs to be preserved.

I appreciate the kind comments from my colleagues. We've got some great historians here in the House. I think Mr. Arnott perhaps said it best. In Canada, we take for granted these things. We don't preserve our heritage

like we should, like other countries do. To underscore that, just a few weeks ago 25 people from the ministry of retired persons in China flew into Toronto, drove up to the homestead and did a tour. That's how interested the Chinese are. We have delegations all the time, from many, many countries, come to this homestead. All it has in front of it right now is an historic plaque. It's not the big tourist attraction it could be.

The fact of the matter is, the Banting family wants to make it a diabetic camp for youth. I appreciate the support of all members of this House. I hope the bill will pass, and I hope the government will actually call it for third reading.

1100

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Ms. Smith has moved private members' notice of motion number 5. Pursuant to standing order 96, Ms. Smith, you have up to 10 minutes. You have the floor.

**Ms. Smith:** I rise today to speak to the issue of nuisance bears, which is very important in my area, and in my riding in particular. Although it is perhaps somewhat selfish of me to take up the time of the House on this issue, I think it is an issue for all of Ontario, and specifically for northern Ontario.

This issue, which has always been a part of our lives up in northern Ontario, came to my attention most recently this fall. It has really become an important issue and a serious safety concern for the children of our community and for the broader general public. I decided to bring forward this resolution in September, when I had spoken to a number of people who had been directly affected by the presence of nuisance bears in our communities.

Nuisance bears are affecting our schools. In Mattawa, the school is on guard for bears. Let me just cite for you an article from the North Bay Nugget: "Hungry black bears are roaming the streets of Mattawa and Trout Creek, and the North Bay District Ministry of Natural Resources is getting swamped with calls from people who say the bruins are getting too close for comfort." This is dated September 9, 2005. "At least one school has increased supervision during recess after tracks were found on its property, and residents are walking in groups at night with flashlights and bells to ward off encounters." This is in downtown Mattawa. The council in Mattawa "discussed the situation at a special meeting ... after a bear tore apart a garbage box" at some time over the weekend of September 9 "at the Mattawa Child Care Centre on the St. Victor school property." The bears are right in the school properties, right in our communities.

In North Bay proper, we've had bear sightings near the West Ferris Secondary School. On September 14, we

had to have the North Bay Police Service and our humane society get involved and actually trap and remove a bear cub. They were involved because the Ministry of Natural Resources' bear wise technicians were unavailable at the time due to the high number of calls and traps being sets in Mattawa and other communities. We do have resources in place to deal with the nuisance bears. However, they're being tapped out.

Again, this one really brought it close to home for me in October, when we had a bear sighting right next to our high school at 11:30 in the morning. The high school yard is attached to a primary school. The children in the primary school were kept in the school for their lunch-hour recess because the teachers were too concerned about letting them out while there was a bear in the vicinity. The police were called and they actually shot this bear cub out of a tree in front of the students. I bring this particular incident to your attention because it was right in downtown North Bay. It was about eight blocks from where I live. It's right next to the school that my brother attended. It's very scary. It also disturbed the children and the neighbourhood. That was following a sighting the night before of a bear in that neighbourhood as well.

When I was in Mattawa recently for a rally, I met with some of the seniors there who were afraid to take out their garbage. They're afraid to go out of their homes. One particular senior told me that she hadn't left her house for two days after she'd seen a bear at the end of her driveway. This isn't, of course, just an issue for my riding. As you know, we've had some serious bear incidents across the province, including the tragic mauling death of Dr. Jacqueline Perry in September in the Missin-aibi Lake provincial park and the injuring of her husband.

The numbers speak for themselves: There have been an inordinate number of sightings this year in particular of nuisance bears across the province. Province-wide last year, 2004, we had 948 occurrence of bear sightings in August, and in September we had 736. This year, 2005, we had 1,758 reported occurrences in August, and in September we had 2,385. Let me just compare that to the numbers of bears that have been reported killed: In 2004, 25 in June and 30 in July. In 2005, 81 in August and 92 in September. We're seeing an exponential growth in the number of sightings of nuisance bears and then having to deal with them.

Again, the number of bears reported killed is a low number, because it's those reported. We have a number of residents who are taking issues into their own hands, dealing with the nuisance bear problem on their property. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters questioned some of the numbers that the Ministry of Natural Resources is putting out, because they feel that they are being under-reported.

I want to take the Legislature through a brief history of where we've been and where we're going with the bear hunt. Back in the 1980s, there was an open bear hunt; there was no real restriction on our bear hunt. In 1987, we introduced some licensing restrictions around the bear hunt. It wasn't until 1999 that we actually saw the elimin-

ation of the spring bear hunt, many would argue for political reasons, and many have questioned the science behind that decision.

I will concede that there are some questions around the science and the correlation between the increase in nuisance bear sightings and the elimination of the spring bear hunt. However, the people of my community are firmly of the belief that the elimination of the spring bear hunt has increased the number of nuisance bear sightings and the bear population in the north.

As you know, in December 2003, our government introduced the bear wise strategy. This is based on some very good science: Most of the reports from different jurisdictions talk about the fact that we have to educate the population on how to deal with our nuisance bears. The bear wise program, introduced in March 2004, outlined a strategy for reporting bear sightings, responding to those bear sightings and preventing human-bear conflicts. As the Minister of Natural Resources reported yesterday, the reporting line which we set up, which is a 24-hour, toll-free hotline, has had 14,500 calls.

We have developed protocols with 40 municipalities in order to deal with nuisance bear calls, and our municipalities are supported by the MNR. But as I indicated, in our community and the North Bay sighting in West Ferris, we didn't have the resources available because there are so many calls that our resources are tapped out.

I might also draw your attention to the fact that in 1996-97, the previous Conservative government cut the resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources down to the bone. We have, over time, been building them up since our government came into power. We have been providing more resources to that ministry in order to deal with these problems, but there is a legacy of problems within the ministry not having the proper resources that they need.

The bear wise program is going some way to deal with the problem, but as I've noted, our communities are noting an increase, this year especially. I wanted to bring it to the attention of my fellow legislators, as well as to the attention of the general public. In the North Bay Nugget on October 1, we had a report of a gentleman living in Powassan who shot four bears outside his home after they ripped off the screen door of his home. In his home at that time were his wife and six-month-old child. That causes huge concerns in a community where we have bears being that brazen and bold. That led the township of Chisholm, at its council meeting in October, to pass the following resolution:

"Whereas the cancellation of the spring bear hunt several years ago has resulted in an overabundant black bear population; and

"Whereas the black bear population is becoming increasingly bold and there are increased incidents of nuisances bear and bear attacks in urban and rural areas; and

"Whereas the spring bear hunt was a viable management tool and a way of controlling the black bear population;

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that the council of the corporation of the township of Chisholm petitions the



Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, to immediately move to reinstate the bear hunt, and further, that this resolution be circulated to local members of Parliament and all municipalities in the province of Ontario for support.”

The science is there. Many reports have indicated that prevention and education is an important component in dealing with the spring bear hunt. But there are also other ways of dealing with nuisance bears, and I would argue that one of those ways is to reintroduce the spring bear hunt and allow for some management through that means.

1110

Most recently, in the state of Pennsylvania, where they've been dealing with the issue, they introduced a management plan for black bears in October 2005 based on the most recent science and studies. They do indicate that nuisance bear conflicts have economic and public safety consequences. They go through a number of initiatives which they are introducing, including a major educational effort. But as part of their overall strategy, they are looking at, by October 2008, identifying areas within their bear management units where locally high bear abundance is a factor in human-bear conflict and they're evaluating if hunting may be used to reduce that abundance. I would suggest that might be an appropriate approach for our government to deal with the nuisance bear problem which is putting our population at risk, particularly in the north. I think the issue of our children's and our seniors' safety is something this Legislature has to take seriously.

I thank you for your time, and I look forward to responding to my colleagues.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join in the debate on this resolution from the member from Nipissing, “That in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears.” I'm very pleased that the member has brought forward this resolution. It's important to get the government's attention on this issue, although I would point out that the member is part of the government and the government doesn't need a resolution from private members' business to act on the question of nuisance bears—although I think this resolution is certainly a lot more important than the past one, which was the Kormos resolution to do with a dress code in the Legislature. This is certainly a much more important issue.

The government needs to act on the recommendations of a report that was tabled on August 28, 2003, and that's the Nuisance Bear Review Committee report. In that report, there was a recommendation for a partial reinstatement of the spring bear hunt. Now, they didn't find in that report a connection between the cancellation of the spring bear hunt and an increase in the number of bears, but they did recommend a reinstatement of a very controlled spring bear hunt for socio-economic reasons.

There was also a recommendation in that report for further research, and I think that is very much needed.

Information I have from an independent organization on the bear synopsis for 2005 says that Ontario's black bear population may now be 100% higher than what the MNR is telling the public—that means 200,000 or more and growing. The MNR's estimate of 100,000 is based on information more than 20 years old.

This has been a bad year for bear attacks and deaths. We've had at least four people attacked—one killed—in Ear Falls, Chapleau, Sioux Lookout and Upsala. Problem and nuisance bears are at unprecedented levels across the province. For example, the town of Marathon recently declared their garbage dump a danger zone. MNR's province-wide toll-free number received 15,000 calls in 2004. The OPP and residents are killing problem and nuisance bears at unprecedented levels.

I received a lot of information, and I don't have enough time to go through everything, because other members want to speak to this. But I did receive some excellent information from an outfitter in the north, Roxann Lynn at Moose Horn Lodge—a whole package of information, including some highlighted excerpts from the Liberal campaign document of 2003.

But one of the more compelling letters in that information package is a letter from the Minister of Conservation for the province of Manitoba. I'll highlight a couple of parts of that letter: “Experience in this province”—Manitoba—“has shown that if bear populations increase, then there would be an increase in the number of bear-human conflicts. This increase would lead to more bears being killed in response to increased property damage and to circumstances where personal safety is at risk. Large numbers of cubs would subsequently be orphaned as, inherently, less thought is given in these circumstances to the protection of females and cubs....”

“The spring bear hunt provides socio-economic benefits to Manitoba. The purchase of goods and services by both resident and non-resident hunters, coupled with initiatives such as the mandatory use of outfitters and resident licensed guides by non-resident hunters, is important in many areas of the province, particularly where high unemployment exists.

“Manitoba's bear populations are stable, and Manitoba Conservation views a well-managed spring bear hunt as a legitimate approach to managing the bear population.”

“With respect to your inquiry on orphaned cubs, it is my understanding that approximately six orphaned cubs are handled each year by Manitoba Conservation.”

Interestingly enough, that letter was signed by Oscar Lathlin, the Minister of Conservation for the province of Manitoba. In Ontario, a partial assessment of the number of orphaned bears with no spring bear hunt, which was part of the justification for the cancellation of the spring bear hunt—in 2001 in Ontario, there were 159 orphaned bears as compared to six in Manitoba.

Also, this person sent a letter from the minister in Quebec as well, outlining why they support having a spring bear hunt as well.

I think the spring bear hunt obviously has some socio-economic benefits, but also it is a tool for the control of the population of bears. We've certainly seen many in-



cidents this year, in particular the very tragic incident near Chapleau, when Jacqueline Perry, a doctor from Brantford, was killed by a bear.

I support this resolution, and I think the government should act on the report that it has in its hands and received in August 2003. I look forward to some comments from other members of our party who want to add something to this debate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Well, I think there has been a conversion in this Legislature. I just heard it happen a couple of times this morning. Us northerners—Mike, Monique, others. When was it that the bear hunt was cancelled in northern Ontario? Was it under the Liberal government? Was it under the NDP government? No. It was under the Conservative government. I just heard the whip for the Conservative Party now take a position that we should reinstate the black bear hunt, and I think that's rather interesting, considering it was his very party that cancelled it in the first place. So I look forward to a response to this question from the Tory caucus when they get up and debate. Is I to take—"Is I," as I always say in good English, right? Am I to then take from the speech from the Conservative whip that the Conservative Party has reversed themselves and they are now taking the position that we should reinstate the black bear hunt in the province of Ontario? I need to know that from the Conservative caucus.

I also heard my good and esteemed colleague from North Bay—I think I heard her right, and I was a bit surprised. As some people say, I almost swallowed my bubble gum because I thought what I heard you say was that you're in favour of the reinstatement of the spring hunt. I would like a clarification on that at the end, because if that's the case, then I would ask the member, why not bring the motion in the House this morning rather than having a motion now that basically says, "The government should do everything possible to deal with black bears"? Well, that's kind of a no-brainer. We're all going to vote for that, and we all believe that the government should do all it can about nuisance bears and protect the public. I don't think there's a member in this House who's going to vote against that. But if the position of the Liberal member is that there should be a reinstatement of the spring bear hunt as a means to control the black bear population in northern Ontario, if that's what Madame Smith is saying, I would suggest that you should say that categorically, yes or no, because maybe I misunderstood you. I heard you say yes. If the answer is yes, then you should have amended your motion to say, "I call on the Legislature to reinstate the black bear hunt," and we could have had a very clear vote. People would have voted the way they were, and we would have known the position of both the Liberal and the Tory caucuses.

I've got to say that our caucus—I'm personally not on side with this decision—has always taken the position that the cancellation is something that should be maintained. That's what my leader says and that's what the majority of caucus says, other than me. I've taken an opposite view. Sometimes you lose these battles within

caucus and you take your lumps and you go along. However, that is the position of the NDP caucus, and I'll be very clear about that. But if I'm hearing that there is now a change on the part of the Conservatives and Liberals, that they are now reversing themselves and saying we should reinstate the black bear hunt—I just thought that was rather interesting. The motion should have been straight up or straight down: "Do you vote for the reinstatement of the black bear hunt?"

1120

I want to say that we have, as all legislators have over the years, made fun of the black bear thing. But it's really a serious issue in northern Ontario. For anybody who lives in northern or, I would argue, central Ontario—you probably have some of the same problems in and around Parry Sound, Muskoka and those areas—I'm telling you, it is a real serious issue. For example, in my own backyard last year, at about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning—I live in downtown Timmins. It's not as if I live out in the bush. I have a cottage out in Kamiskotia, but I live in downtown Timmins, on Middleton Avenue. I, like most residents, have been woken up a whole bunch of times over the last two or three years by bears in our backyards. And I live in a downtown community. I don't leave my garbage outside, so there's nothing for the bear. The barbecue is protected, so there's nothing for the bear to get in the barbecue. But the bears, rummaging for food, travel from one backyard to the other knocking over barbecues, trying to get into homes, going into garbage cans. In fact, I've been woken up in the middle of the night more than once by Timmins police chasing black bears out of my backyard on Middleton Avenue.

Just now, before I came into the Legislature, I was talking to Glen and Marjory Ironside on a different issue. I asked them what they thought about this. Their position was that the cancellation was the wrong thing to do. Both Glen and Marjory, like most northerners, I think, say the reinstatement of the black bear hunt is something that should be done, because they're seeing, as citizens in the city of Timmins, an incursion of bears into our community.

I want to relate to you a couple of stories that happened to me just last summer. I think they're kind of indicative of what we're starting to see. First of all, we need to understand what the issue is. As there are more bears out there and humans are basically encroaching on their territory—that's what's happening. As our communities are getting larger, our cottage areas, all that stuff, as we're developing more and more land, there are less and less places for bears to sustain themselves as they normally do out in the forest. As a result of an increased population of bears because of the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, I would argue, you have more bears with fewer places to go, so they're coming to where we live. Basically, we're the ones who are backing up into their backyard.

The point is this: The bears are not as afraid as they used to be. I'll give you a couple of examples of what happened to me this summer. I've got a cottage out in Kamiskotia. We have a dump run by the municipality, so



you bring your garbage out to the dump. Obviously, there are going to be bears at a dump. We all know that. That happened even before the cancellation of the black bear hunt. But here's the difference. It used to be that you'd see one or two, sometimes three bears, from time to time, at the dump. But if you saw them, and you drove up in your truck or your car with the trailer on the back with the garbage, the bears used to skedaddle. They didn't want to be around humans, because they were nervous about having humans around them. Nowadays, those bears don't give a darn. They're in big numbers. I'll show up at the dump and there will be five, six, seven bears rummaging through the garbage bags at the dump. It's to the point that you know when you go to the dump now, you're going to see bears.

Here are a couple of things that happened to me this summer. I went over one time with my Uncle Condo, who has a cottage just up the road from us. I have this habit—because a lot of our elderly neighbours don't want to go to the dump. Mrs. Damini next door doesn't want to go to the dump because she's afraid of the bears. Mr. and Mrs. Lo-a-chie, on the other side, don't like to go to the dump because of the bears. So I've gotten in the habit of picking up the garbage as I go to get rid of the garbage for the neighbours who are afraid to go to the dump. Well, I went with my Uncle Condo, I think it was this summer, and we saw the bears. We drove up and did what we normally do—made a bit of noise, trying to scare the bears away. But they weren't being scared away, so we took my truck and parked it a little farther away so the bears wouldn't bother us. So here I am, and I know there are no bears where I'm dumping the garbage into the hole. The bears are over there by about 150 feet. I see there are no bears inside the hole. I walk behind my pickup truck, open up the back and take out the garbage bags. I'm talking to Uncle Condo as I throw the garbage in, at which point my Uncle Condo goes, "Holy Jeez, look behind you!" I'm throwing the garbage on top of the bears, because those suckers had walked across during the time I had turned around; they were like five and 10 feet behind me, and I'm throwing garbage bags on to the bears. It was, "Whoa, let's get out of here."

Something could have happened. Some people would say that might have been a good thing, if there had been a by-election in Timmins-James Bay. I think most people would have said no. But the point is that the bears are no longer afraid of humans, and it's getting to be a problem. Even somebody like me, who has grown up in the bush and who understands the rules of the outdoors—I'm careful and responsible about how I approach this; I looked to see if there were any bears. I'm used to bears. We've had them around for a long time. And here, these bears had no fear. They saw me throwing garbage out of the back of my truck. They're at the point where I'm throwing garbage and I hit one bear square in the head, right in the snout, with the garbage bag. If the bear had got kind of—thank God there was a steak or something inside that bag, because he didn't come after me; he went after the bag. That was a good thing. That's an interesting thing:

"Bisson? Garbage bag? Bisson? Garbage bag?" Imagine the decision that bear had to make. That's scary when I think about it. That's another story.

I've got to tell you another story. We go back and we tell this story to some of our neighbours over a couple of wobbly pops, as we call them back at the cottage. We're having supper over a glass of wine and talking about this bear story. My aunt says, "You know what? Every time I've brought people out to the dump to take a look at bears, I was never lucky to see bears. Can I go with you next time?" I said, "Sure." So I pick up Aunt Carmen, I put her in the truck, we drive out to the dump, and there, behold, are about four, five or six bears. We're sitting there looking at the bears; we're inside the truck where it's nice and safe. Finally, the bears kind of move away, so I open the truck door and my aunt is going, "Gilles, Gilles, arrête. Don't do that. The bear is going to come after us." I say, "Ma tante, don't worry." I grab the garbage bags, I throw them inside the hole at the dump, I get back in the truck and I sit down.

Now, because I was throwing the garbage, the bears got attracted. This is the interesting part, back to my point that they're no longer afraid. The bear didn't only come up to sniff the garbage, didn't only put his paws on my truck and look at the window; it got in the back, the box of my truck. Here my aunt is panicking inside the truck somewhat, saying, "Look at that. The bear is in the back of the truck. What do we do?" I said, "Let's drive and show it to Uncle Condo." I didn't have the nerve to do that, because I would have brought the bear into a populated area, but that was my reaction. My point is, the bears aren't afraid any more. The bears are basically in contact with humans much more than they have ever been before, to the point where the fearful part is that they're not afraid.

Another story: In Smooth Rock Falls, a gentleman—and I can't remember his name. I wish I had called for the name. If I had called Réjeanne Demeules, the mayor, she would have told me. This guy was at a celebration that the community was putting on last year, I think it was. The story with him is, he comes walking out of the arena at the celebration, in the middle of summer, on an August day, walking across the town as he normally does to get back to his house. He turns the corner at the schoolyard, and what does he come in contact with? A big black bear. Now, he kind of got scared, so he raised his arm. The bear took a swipe at him and scraped him, the whole bit. Now, you should see the bear. I've got to say, the bear fared less well than the guy did. The guy only got swiped at. I wonder what happened to the bear. The point is, they're not afraid of humans any more and that's really what we need to take seriously.

One other thing before I wrap up. One of the things that happened, again this summer: We've had this cottage at Kamiskotia since about 1961, and we have never seen bears on our property. Mrs. Damini or Mr. Lane next door, or ourselves, or the Lo-a-chies or the Albertsons, or the Vincours, we've never seen bears on our property. They've just always stayed away. What we've started to see last year and this year is that the bears are starting to



incur on to our properties. They are not satisfied staying at the dump; they're now coming up to the cottages and they're looking for garbage in our garbage cans. We're responsible cottagers; we don't keep garbage in our garbage cans. But to show you the degree to which these bears are persistent, I've got this garage that's built out of railway ties that my father built before he died. He built this great garage out of railway ties, a pretty solid thing. I've got a habit that if I leave the cottage, I take my garbage cans and I put them inside the garage and lock it up because I don't want the bears being attracted by the scent of an empty garbage can, those plastic ones with the covers on them.

So I go away, and my mom comes in the next day to the cottage. My mom is 70-some years old; I won't say her age. She drives the car in and she walks into the cottage. She didn't notice, but the bear was around where the garage is. It was a neighbour who noticed that the bear was scratching at the door of the garage, had ripped part of the door apart, and was trying to dig underneath to get inside the garage. It luckily couldn't get in because I have a cement floor there so he couldn't dig his way underneath. My mother walked right by the bear. She happened not to see it because the bear was down and not scratching at the door as she walked in. Now, the point is, what can a 70-some-year-old woman or anybody do if they walk into a bear? It can be a very dangerous situation.

I think a couple of things need to be done. The government has said that they were willing to re-upload the responsibility of taking care of the nuisance bears. I think that's a good thing. That's something that we, as New Democrats, called for. But we've not done the kind of stuff that we need to do in order to protect citizens when it comes to bears. For example, there was supposed to be a program put out where basically the government was going to spend some money on trying to do some public education about what to do when you're in contact with a bear, because for a lot of people, it's just a natural reaction, if you run across a bear, what you do. There are things that you should do and things that you shouldn't do, and if you do the wrong thing, the bear may come after you. Those are some of the things that I think the government needs to look at.

This motion? Obviously, we're going to support it.

You didn't tell me anything. Do you want time?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** It's OK.  
1130

**Mr. Bisson:** OK. She says to keep on going. I just looked up at the time and noticed where I was at.

Anyway, I say to the government, I think there's not going to be anybody who is going to vote against this motion. As parents, as citizens of our communities and as MPPs, it's a no-brainer. We're all in favour of doing more to protect the public from nuisance bears. But I go back to my original question to Madame Smith from Nipissing—I forget the name of the riding.

**Ms. Smith:** It's just Nipissing.

**Mr. Bisson:** Just Nipissing. Sorry. I really want to make clear what you're saying here, because what I

thought I heard you say in the debate was that you were in favour of the reintroduction of the spring bear hunt. If that's the case, there are people in northern Ontario who would agree with you. I just think that what you should do is be clear, yes or no, are you in favour? If you are, I'd like to know an answer to the question, why, then, did you not put into the motion that we should vote here today, this day, on the reintroduction of the spring bear hunt? If you can answer those two questions, that would be very helpful.

I say again to my colleagues, we will be in support. I'm sure we have not heard the last of the bear story. It's an issue that I think affects many people across Ontario. We need to figure out what to do with this, because as Madame Smith has said—she's right, and I totally agree with her on this—somebody is going to get hurt. We've already had somebody killed this summer in Missinaibi Park. We're now at the point where we're seeing bears in schoolyards, and she pointed that out in her debate, quite rightfully. I know it's happened in my constituency, where bears have been sighted during the school year in the schoolyard at an elementary school. That's pretty scary stuff. I think we need to figure out what we can do as legislators to be able to make it safe so that people are not put at risk because of the increasing bear population and the bears being less afraid and coming into our communities. We need to do what we can to make it safe, and we will vote for this motion.

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan):** It is my pleasure to rise today and speak to this motion. I'd like to thank the member from Nipissing for introducing it. The member is from North Bay as well, and being from Thunder Bay, I think that people from southern Ontario sometimes confuse the two. We're only about 10 or 15 hours apart by car. It's a bit of a segue, though, into this issue, because I think this issue was confused by those in southern Ontario as well when they were trying to get it right back in 1999.

I can tell you that one of the first times I spoke in caucus after the election was on this issue. It was then, and it is still now, a very sensitive issue in northern Ontario, and I think that in short order it is going to become a bit more of a sensitive issue in southern Ontario as well.

If we go back to 1999 and look at the history of what was intended here, beginning with the chronology of Harris and Snobelen and the Shad Foundation, the intention as an animal welfare issue, I think—at least that put out there for public consumption—was that we were going to try and limit the number of bear cubs that were orphaned through the spring bear hunt. That is what was put forward as the reason for substantiating the cancellation of the hunt, that there were too many cubs being orphaned. Well, in fact, as is often the case when we sometimes meddle with Mother Nature, we get it exactly wrong. If you talk to the people in the know, they will be the first ones to tell you that this cancellation of the spring bear hunt has had probably the exact opposite effect. There are probably—and according to them, most



assuredly—more bear cubs being orphaned now than there were before the cancellation of the hunt, and that's for two or three different reasons.

One is that during the spring bear hunt, there were many more adult male bears that were being culled. Of all the bears being taken during the spring hunt, about 70% of them were male bears. Of course, when there are more male bears in the bush, they become very cannibalistic in their nature when they get hungry; in fact, they will take bear cubs, and that's what's happening now as there are more male bears allowed to be in the bush.

In the fall hunt, there are now more female bears being mistakenly taken as well, which of course leads to cubs being orphaned.

The third thing, and most important, I think, for this Legislature to consider, is that there is a phenomenon that's occurring in northern Ontario now, and it's referred to where I come from as the "shoot, shovel and shut up" approach. As the number of large bears increases, people are taking matters into their own hands. If you think this policy is stopping the orphaning of bear cubs, I can tell you that when people live in remote communities, when they feel that their lives are in danger, that their children's lives are in danger, that their property is in danger, they are in fact taking matters into their own hands and shooting these bears. Many of them are not turning up in the numbers we see that are reported to MNR; they're just being killed. Of course, the result of that is orphan cubs as well. So if you are somebody out there who is concerned about animal welfare and you think that this policy was well-intentioned, I call tell you it's having exactly the opposite effect to what was intended. There are two main issues for me as well: the safety and the economic issues that this policy has affected.

In my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, I think I can safely say that, overwhelmingly, the people I represent in that constituency all would see this issue as having gotten greatly out of control. The sightings are increasing exponentially, as has been mentioned by the member from Nipissing. I can tell you there are schools that no longer put their kids out for recess in the fall, because they are afraid. There are too many bears in town. I can tell you about an individual who was pulled by a bear out of his tent and was being drawn into the bush, the bear seeing him now as a food source.

One of the things we're told is the reason for the increase in sightings is that it was a bad crop year, or that there was not enough food in the bush. Well, we had many years previously where there were bad crop years, and we did not see the increased number of sightings. There are things going on, and primarily what it is is that there are too bears many in the bush.

I don't like the word "nuisance" bear, either. I think that severely understates the seriousness of this issue. These are dangerous animals that will kill at a moment's notice.

I have to go quickly. I apologize.

Economically: Ecotourism does not replace what was lost by the fall hunt. This was a \$40-million annual

revenue stream in the north. If you multiply that, on a relative basis, that would be a multi-billion dollar industry in southern Ontario.

I'm told I need to wrap up. I apologize for rushing through this.

I want to comment on the bear wise program. I think it is something that was well-intended. It has gone, through its education and prevention strategies, a fair way to trying to help a little bit, but clearly, this is a much more serious issue than can be addressed by simply the bear wise program. We need to give serious reconsideration to the reinstatement of the hunt.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant):** We're debating a resolution that the government do "whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears." I feel it is a much broader issue than that. It's an economic issue—certainly in the north—and it's a heritage issue.

The controversy has been around, I guess, since the mid-1980s. There were areas in North America where populations were declining, and much of that has rebounded, but that's certainly not a problem in the province of Ontario where the black bear population is one of the largest in North America. MNR had some conservative estimates two years ago of 75,000 to 100,000 bears. I think they've rejigged that to 150,000 bears, and I hear estimates of 200,000 bears.

With any large population of an animal like that, one of the most effective means of population control is hunting. Hunting is a management tool. It's a tool that is more than appropriate with respect to increasing populations of cormorants, for example, raccoons and possums. We have an issue in our area with the possum cycle. I think of deer. Myself, I've smashed into two deer in the last year. I've smashed two cars now. That tells me there are too many deer in my area. Again, hunting is the biological control.

However, banning the hunting of bears in the spring was not, at the time, a biological sustainability issue. As has been said here today, it was an issue related to the practice of hunting, to the position that young bears were potentially orphaned at that time of the year at a time when they're highly dependent on their mothers. But again, if you shoot a bear at the dump or kill one in your backyard in the spring, you have potentially created an orphaned cub. There are other reasons for cub mortality: starvation, for one, and the killing of cubs by male bears. I don't know whether they eat them or not. That's where we have to rely on expert opinion and science.

We have an ongoing controversy on the spring bear hunt. I fully support continued, objective, research-based analysis of the issue and scientific investigation. Much study has been done. I don't know how much of that has been made public or if the general public is aware of it, and I certainly don't think much of that has been acted on. Ongoing, independent external reviews are very important.

1140

Of course, safety is paramount. The protection of our environment and the management of species like bears is

dependant on a number of things. I feel it's very important that we maintain the legislative protection of our heritage rights and that we continue to rekindle the interest of young people in hunting. We have the hunter apprenticeship safety program in Ontario. That's an excellent program. We have legislation that protects the heritage of hunting and fishing. All of this, in my view, is very important for future generations, not only in northern Ontario but in southern Ontario.

I live in the sticks. I'm a hunter. I smash into deer with my car. I guess I get my limit that way. For many of us in the south and the north, hunting is a way of life, and that includes the spring bear hunt.

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** I know our time is limited and there are numerous speakers today, so I will try to condense what I have as best as possible. First let me say that I fully support the member from Nipissing's resolution to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the safety of Ontarians is paramount. Certainly in northern Ontario, in the riding of Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding area, this has become a much larger issue in recent years. I can recall being on city council, and a trapper who was contracted by the city used to get about 15 to 20 calls about nuisance bears in the area of Sault Ste. Marie. Following the 1999 cancellation of the hunt, that number escalated to 250, to 600, and there are now well over 900 calls of reported bears in Sault Ste. Marie and area. A Web site, sootoday.com, continually posts bear sightings, and if anybody logs on there, they can see just how many sightings we're talking about. We're not talking about an area that is in the wilderness, in the backwoods of northern Ontario; we're talking about residential areas, main streets, schoolyards and the like.

I would like to read a brief article that appeared in the October 1, 2005, Sault Star. This certainly doesn't have much to do with wildlife science. It's important to get the history of the cancellation on the record here at Queen's Park. This was written by a former NDP candidate in the Algoma-Manitoulin riding and I think it's right on the mark:

"Many northerners believe this is the inevitable result of the cancellation of the spring bear hunt in 1999, a decision that continues to produce as much controversy and polarized opinion as the hunt, itself, did.

"Why was the hunt cancelled?

"It had nothing to do with the preservation of black bears in Ontario. The estimated bear population in the province, then and now, is between 75,000 and 100,000 animals, which is close to capacity for the available range.

"The government's stated reason for the cancellation of the spring hunt was concern over the orphaning of bear cubs that was alleged to have occurred when hunters mistakenly shot nursing sows. The more widely accepted reason for the hunt cancellation was that the Tory government of the time blinked when a group opposed to the bear hunt threatened to mount a vigorous campaign in ... 1999 ... against eight first-term Tory MPPs in southern

Ontario who won their seats by a narrow margin of victory in the 1995 election. The group, funded by industrialist Robert Schad, distributed videos concerning the bear hunt to homes in the 'swing' ridings and conducted billboard campaigns against the hunt in southern Ontario.

"The number of bear cubs orphaned wasn't really significant—in the eyes of the anti-hunting groups and, ultimately, then Minister of Natural Resources John Snobelen, any number was too many. There are far more cubs orphaned each year by ... vehicle collisions than the number orphaned by the spring bear hunt. But the images of cute cubs on billboards in Toronto and the probable reaction of people in the southern portion of the province was too much for the Tories to ignore. They went ahead with the cancellation of the hunt, even in the face of concern over how much political clout and influence an interest group with deep pockets could have over the Ontario government. Ironically, the number of cubs actually orphaned has still never been accurately quantified.

"Rather than investing some money in an objective analysis of the mortality of cubs, the group spearheading the cancellation drive seized upon hypothetical estimates and stated them as fact on numerous occasions."

The addition in Ontario of 20,000 large bears over the past six years is an incredible concern, both in northern areas and throughout the province. The article concludes by saying, "Any measures that the bear management strategy concludes are necessary, including the reinstatement of the spring bear hunt, should be implemented. Never again in Ontario should biologically correct wildlife management strategies be trumped by political manoeuvring."

The presence of bears in the Sault Ste. Marie area in the community and in the city—I think we're fooling ourselves if we're thinking that these bears are not being shot. They're being shot now by city police officers and by the OPP. In schoolyards, there are reports of recesses being cancelled in Sault Ste. Marie; kids can't go out and enjoy some fresh air because there are bears in the schoolyards. As a former teacher, I recall getting notes from students who had come late to class, saying, "I couldn't get to the car because there was a bear in the driveway."

I just want to express my complete support for the member from Nipissing to do whatever is necessary to ensure that we protect the safety of all Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** This is actually a topic that I'm very passionate about and I could spend a lot of time speaking about it. I'm going to be very succinct in the time remaining on some of the issues.

We talked about reporting bears. I'll give you an example. I hired an individual just outside of Timmins, in Mr. Bisson's riding. Pierre said a bear came into his yard up in Foleyet and killed his dog. I asked him, "Did you report it?" He said, "Oh, absolutely. I reported that bear." I said, "Well, do you remember about eight years ago, when you had the bear in the barnyard, and you went in



and grabbed the gun and came out? It had gone from the barnyard into the tack shop, and when you were standing there, you could hear a noise. You turned and looked, and the bear ran right overtop of you. You shot it and it fell dead after it had knocked you over. Did you report that one?" He said, "Well, no. Why?" I said, "Why would you report one that kills your dog, but you wouldn't report the other one?" That's because the incidence of reporting is now almost 100%. You're seeing a large number of incidents being reported because of those bases, because people are reporting them, and they should have been doing that in the first place.

Some of other things that need to be made very clear: When you're talking about territories of bears, the average boar or male bear will range up to 90 miles as part of their territory. I read in a book dealing with Oshawa, printed by Dr. Hoig, which stated that in 1918, an individual had just picked up his new car and drove to the ridges in Oshawa, which is about halfway between Port Perry and Oshawa. He saw a big black bear—it could have been any size—and he turned around and came back. In other words, the point I'm trying to make is that the range of bears has extended throughout the province of Ontario, and documents right back to 1918, when you talk about those things.

You talk about municipalities taking on the responsibility. One of the positions within the ministry was that if you take on the responsibility of bears, what happens with deer? What happens, for example, as on my street, when a deer crashes through the school window and goes right into the school? What happens with raccoons, opossums, beavers and all the other animals? Or birds and bird droppings? I know I get complaints because birds are leaving droppings in one place in one particular house. What happens with all those incidents? Is it the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources to take on all those actions and correct them all? No, I don't believe so, because once you accept the responsibility, and total responsibility, for one animal, then you take on the onus of accepting responsibility for all the other animals as well.

The member from Thunder Bay mentioned bears killing cubs. The reason for that is a practice called infanticide. What takes place is the boars go out, they find the cubs and kill them in order to bring the females back into season so they can breed them so that their prodigy or their life cycle or genes can continue on in cycle. That's the main reason that bears practice infanticide.

My, my, how we've changed from the NDP, when Frances Rankin stood up in this Legislature and gave out little tiny teddy bears to everybody. Soft, little teddy bears were going to be saved because the spring bear hunt was now protected. Well, guess what? The reality of the situation now is that bears are doing what bears do best, and that's going out to feed and get involved. They participate in activities and, all of a sudden, people are starting to realize, "Oh, my God. I'm seeing bears in my cottage now like never before, and they're not afraid of me."

1150

The spring bear hunt was more about managing the population numbers. The report in 2003 indicated that the numbers should not increase until 2005 because of the cancellation of the hunt. The reality of that situation is that bears are creatures of habit. In the springtime, when they are chased by dogs and shot at by people, they realize, "People: bad things; stay away." There was a report handed to me by a person, Vern Mason, that indicated that the reason the bears were going inside and ripping open tents and sleeping bags was because of the same thing Mr. Bisson mentioned. Guess what? At the dump, they smell humans, they smell garbage, they associate it with food and they rip the bag open. The same thing with tents and sleeping bags: All of a sudden they smell humans, they associate that with past practices, and they tear open the tent or the sleeping bag because they assume there is food there.

It's negative reinforcement that needs to take place, and that's what happened with spring bear hunt. You had negative reinforcement, negatively imprinting humans on bears, and they stayed away from them. When you closed that, it stopped that.

Bear populations are very difficult to assess. There is a tuna can bait line they use to try to determine the numbers, but it's very difficult to determine. In the same fashion that they determine the deer population and how the tags are allocated in that area—and that's done because of the amount of crop damage reported, as well as the number of car incidents that take place—they do the same thing with bears. When there's a large number reporting and a large number of incidents, they potentially have the opportunity to increase the tag allocations in that area to deal with that.

The study in 2003 was designed to effectively determine what is in the best interest not only of people but of bears as a population as well. With the large number and potentially increasing number of incidents, I expect we should see more. The one thing I'm disappointed about in the resolution is that we should have concrete actions in the resolution. I will be supporting it, as I did—and I've been on the record. I've been on radio shows stating that I think the spring bear hunt is something that should be continued. It doesn't help me a lot in Oshawa, but it's a personal belief. In this particular resolution, I think some more action specifically telling us what and how we can move forward would be far more positive.

**Mr. Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay—Superior North):** First of all, I want to thank my colleague from Nipissing, Ms. Smith, for bringing this resolution forward. In my opinion, this debate is long overdue. Indeed, there should be little argument that the province should be doing whatever it can to protect all its citizens from the nuisance bear problem. The question then becomes, what exactly should we do to deal with this increasingly dangerous situation?

In my opinion, we should begin by listening to the people who are affected by this problem: our constituents, all of whom are northern residents, for those of us in the north. For the past several years, I have been



inundated with calls from many constituents terrified as a result of their encounters with bears. Regardless of what ministry officials say about the number of calls they've received, this past summer was the worst in terms of calls I've received. People from Marathon, Terrace Bay, Schreiber—in fact, every community I represent—contacted me by phone to tell their story. On two occasions, constituents actually called me at home while the bear was clawing at their door. Bears are wandering through towns, school yards, backyards, around daycare centers. They are clearly a real danger to our citizens.

Frankly, my constituents become very frustrated when they are told that the problem is a result of a bad berry crop, or they're told to empty their bird feeders or to tightly enclose their household garbage or to be sure to clean their barbecue grill. They are already doing this—perhaps they need to be reminded, but they are already doing this—but the problem continues to get worse.

What we do know is that there are more bears out there than ever, and they appear to have lost their fear of human contact. As we all know, deadly tragedies occurred this past summer, and I fear more will take place unless we deal with the situation in a more aggressive manner. At a time when we are hearing discussions of a bear cull, I want to put on the record today a call for a similar discussion on the return of the spring bear hunt—a more humane, controlled hunt, for sure, but a return nonetheless.

I don't think that anyone in this House would dispute that the cancellation of the hunt in 1999 was purely politically motivated. Not even my Conservative colleagues across the floor, whose government made that decision, would disagree with me. Indeed, the consequences of that decision have been economic devastation for tourist lodge operators in the north and, I would argue, the truly dangerous situation we are facing today. While I do not think that the return of the spring bear hunt will immediately improve the problem, I have become convinced that an improved, properly run spring hunt will make a difference.

But perhaps just as importantly, agreement to begin discussion on the return of the hunt would send an important message to northerners, the message that we are listening to them. We told northerners during the last campaign that decisions affecting the north would be made by northerners. I believe that was a commitment that was genuinely and sincerely made, but in light of the serious concerns regarding the human-bear contact over the past several summers, it's become all the more important that we live up to that commitment. Certainly, a reopening of the discussion regarding reinstatement of the spring bear hunt would send a very clear message that we are indeed listening.

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** In the very brief time, it's great to wrap up on behalf of the members from Nipissing, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Thunder Bay–Superior North and Oshawa.

I would like to raise this challenge with the member from Oshawa and the member from Timmins: that we approach our leaders to look at revising and helping to

get the bear hunt back. The official position of all the parties is that the bear hunt should be banned. I think it's incumbent on us as backbenchers to take a personal challenge to our leaders and talk to them about that.

From my point of view as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, the effect on tourism in the north has been devastating. It's approximately a \$40-million industry. As part of my job as parliamentary assistant, I did a trails consultation across Ontario. In northern Ontario we have the largest and best-run snowmobile trails in all the world. The 43,000 kilometres of snowmobile trails allow us access to nature and allow us to understand our Canadian heritage, for the real Ontarian personality is built in northern Ontario in our interaction with all forms of nature, including the wildlife there.

It is great to support this motion. I compliment the member from Nipissing for bringing it forward. I also hope it leads to concrete action.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Ms. Smith, you have two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Smith:** I'd like to thank those who joined us in this debate this morning: the members for Parry Sound–Muskoka, Timmins–James Bay, Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, Oshawa, Thunder Bay–Superior North, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay–Atikokan and Mississauga South.

I'd like to address a couple of the concerns and issues that were raised by some of my colleagues. I was delighted to hear that the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is onside with us on this, because his caucus is notoriously not onside for a lot of northern issues. It's good to see you're supporting the north.

As many of you will remember, it was former Premier Mike Harris, who formerly represented the riding of Nipissing, who cancelled the bear hunt and left a lot of northerners feeling betrayed. The basis of that decision was not scientific, but was strictly political. Now we have the leader of the Conservative Party, John Tory, up in North Bay, and when asked about nuisance bears, he said more study was needed. I'm glad to see that some of his colleagues, members of his caucus, are onside for the reinstatement of the spring bear hunt. I hope you will have some success in convincing your leader of the need for it.

With respect to the comments from the member for Timmins–James Bay, I have been clear throughout my campaign in Nipissing and here in the House that I am in support of the return of a limited spring bear hunt. I've been clear on that since the beginning; I haven't wavered. There have to be some restrictions, but I believe that the return of the spring bear hunt is part of the management process that will reduce the number of nuisance bears in the north and increase the safety of our residents, including our children and seniors. I think it's a sad indication that your party here, represented by seven members, three of whom are from the north, cannot see fit to support the return of the spring bear hunt, but I leave it to you to convince your fellow members that it's needed here in the community.

You also asked about the education process. Our government has in fact invested \$900,000 in 165 projects



involving prevention, education and awareness through the bear wise program. I know first-hand from my discussions with MNR staff members in my area that they're in the schools, teaching our children about how to be bear wise. I think that is a really important part of this whole strategy on how to increase safety and deal with some of the concerns that have been raised here this morning.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD PRESERVATION ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 PRÉSERVANT LA PROPRIÉTÉ FAMILIALE DE FREDERICK BANTING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall first deal with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mr. Wilson.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members for a vote after we deal with the next ballot item.

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We will now deal with ballot item number 8, standing in the name of Ms. Smith.

Ms. Smith has moved private member's notice of motion number 5, "That in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will vote on this ballot item as well. Call in the members. I remind them, this will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.*

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD PRESERVATION ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 PRÉSERVANT LA PROPRIÉTÉ FAMILIALE DE FREDERICK BANTING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Will members take their seats, please.

Mr. Wilson has moved second reading of Bill 20.

All those in favour, please rise.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo

Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Martiniuk, Gerry

Patten, Richard  
Peterson, Tim  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz

Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Craitor, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Duguid, Brad  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hardeman, Ernie

Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Miller, Norm  
Mossop, Jennifer F.  
Munro, Julia  
Oraziotti, David  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Scott, Laurie  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Wilson, Jim  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 39; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the bill to be referred to the social development committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Wilson has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on social development. Agreed? Agreed.

The doors will now be opened for 30 seconds before the next vote.

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We will now deal with private member's notice of motion number 5, standing in the name of Ms. Smith.

All those in favour, please rise.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Craitor, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Duguid, Brad  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hardeman, Ernie

Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Miller, Norm  
Mossop, Jennifer F.  
Munro, Julia  
Oraziotti, David  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Patten, Richard  
Peterson, Tim  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Scott, Laurie  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Wilson, Jim  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 39; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having now been dealt with, I do leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1210 to 1330.*

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### CHILD CARE

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** Many Ontarians have been contacting me with concerns about the Liberal government's new child care program. Many are concerned that the government's preferred option for child care is expanding spaces in public schools. They want to know, and I want to know, that Ontario's families will be able to choose the child care option that is best for them.

Ontarians do not want child care to be provided only in the manner that suits the government. Parents know what is best for their children, and it should be parents who make the choice.

Ontarians want this government to consult widely before it moves ahead with any province-wide child care system. It must consult not only with the large lobby groups; it must consult with small home daycare operators and with individual families.

Families want to know that their child care options will not be chosen by governments or lobby groups or agencies. They want to do the choosing, as they know what is in the best interests of their own children.

## EDUCATION

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** As we all know, education is a top priority for this government. From the Best Start program, aimed at giving young children the encouragement and support needed to embark on their academic careers, to the student success strategy, which ensures that their career is a long and fruitful one, the McGuinty government has demonstrated that the most important investment we can make is in our youth.

Hamilton West boasts fantastic institutions of higher learning. McMaster University and Mohawk College foster the developing minds of almost 35,000 students annually. It is institutions like these where young people can realize their dreams.

This past November 4, an agreement was put in place that will ensure that more students will have the opportunity to do so. This agreement, known as the "articulation agreement," between the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and Mohawk College will ensure that students from the school board are guaranteed admission to certain Mohawk technical programs if they graduate with certain courses on their transcripts. Furthermore, if these students score an average of 70% or higher in their high school programs, they may be exempted from certain introductory courses in the Mohawk programs.

The school board has many programs in place that will ensure children stay in school in order to realize their full potential. This agreement will further encourage students to pursue a higher education and will aid all students in their path for success, whether they pursue an academic field or a trade.

## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** It is unbelievable that the Minister of Education can come up with \$80 million of taxpayers' money to ensure big union compliance when he has not one red cent to assist those who are given the responsibility of getting our children safely to and from school each and every day.

For over two years now, this minister has done absolutely nothing to address the legitimate concerns of

school bus operators with regard to reasonable compensation for service provided. While the operators struggle to stay afloat, their costs continue to rise. Aging fleets require increased maintenance to meet safety standards. They can't even think of investing in new fuel-efficient buses with new safety enhancements. Operators from my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, such as Chuck Sandrelli, Steve Murray and Jim Manion, have told me repeatedly that this must be dealt with or they simply can't afford to continue.

I say to the minister, take the politics out of this equation. Stop taking our children for granted. These operators have virtually no control over their costs. You must recognize that the transportation allocation given to school boards must be tied to the actual costs of operating a school bus.

You have broken your promise to keep rural schools open. You've gone back on your word. At least take the necessary action now to ensure that we can get our children safely to and from the schools that you have left open.

## SUPPORT FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I want to raise again in the House on an issue that I'm finding, alarmingly, is becoming more and more of an issue in my constituency of Timmins-James Bay. I would venture to guess that the issue is one that other members of the Legislature are hearing in their own constituencies, and that is that there seems to be a bit of a pattern developing that agencies such as the Association for Community Living, Access Better Living and various agencies that provide support in the community for those who are developmentally challenged are not able to cope to the degree that they need to with the demand in their communities.

For example, in some communities, we see that at the same time the government is shutting down residential institutions in the province, group homes are being shut down in the very communities that the residents will have to be moved to when those institutions close. We see as well—and one of the things that I find extremely alarming—that there are elderly parents who have older children in their 40s or 50s whom they are wanting to make sure are in a residential setting in a group home before it becomes too late for the parents to care for them. They're unable to get in. Why? Because there's not enough capacity in the system to take them. Then we see people needing services in the community in order to live independently who are not getting the services they need.

The government needs to do something to respond to this; otherwise, it is going to fast become a huge crisis in our communities.

## PAUL BOSCH

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** Paul Bosch is a fifth-generation wine grower who moved to Canada in 1963 from Alsace, France, with a viticulture and



oenology degree from the University of Burgundy. After studying the Niagara Peninsula for many years, he founded the Château des Charmes winery in 1978.

While there was a fledgling wine industry already in Niagara, Paul Bosc, with his Old World wine know-how laid the foundation for the development of a world-class wine industry. Paul Bosc's commitment to excellence and disregard for the naysayers paved the way for today's vibrant and internationally recognized Ontario wine industry.

In turn, the establishment of a viable, expanding wine industry has forever changed the lives of Niagara's residents and the economy of Niagara-on-the-Lake. His wines have won over 500 awards at national and international competitions.

Paul Bosc has been the proud recipient of many awards over the years, including the Order of Ontario, the Queen's Golden Jubilee medallion, the Tony Aspler award of excellence in 2005 and, tomorrow—and I'm proud to say this—the nation's highest civilian honour, the Order of Canada.

May this House join with me in congratulating Paul Bosc for his leadership and achievements in growing the Canadian wine industry. And I say to Paul, congratulations, a job well done.

#### PLANT CLOSURES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I'd like to bring the Premier up to date. While he was on his junket over in China, let me update him on what was happening in Ontario.

The Prescott Shirt Co. in Prescott announced it's closing. The maker of Hathaway shirts, one of which I'm wearing, will leave 53 people out of work at Christmastime.

Sleeman Breweries in Guelph announced it's laying off 40 people. It's the first time in their history that they've laid anybody off.

Automation Tooling Systems, a leading-edge, high-tech manufacturer, is closing its plant in Burlington; 40 people out of work.

Glis Inc. of Corunna, just outside of Sarnia, a garment manufacturing plant, is closing; 35 people out of work.

Waterloo-based Dalsa is laying off 60 people, the first time ever that they've downsized.

KUS Canada Inc., a piston manufacturer in Leamington, is closing their doors; 127 people out of work.

The famous World's Finest Chocolates factory, Campbellford, Ontario: 125 full-time employees. The plant is closing.

The Hershey chocolate plant in Smith Falls is laying off 50 people.

Glenoit in Elmira is closing; 75 jobs gone. They're moving their equipment to China. I wonder, did you happen to see that equipment last week, Mr. Premier, when you were over there?

Rheem Canada is closing its Hamilton-based headquarters; 150 people out of work.

Harrowsmith Cheese Factory—closed; 89 people out of work. It goes on and on.

Hemosol of Mississauga, an artificial blood substitute manufacturer, is laying off 50 people, leaving only 22 employees. Like Ontario, this company is bleeding to death while you, Mr. Premier, were traipsing around China.

1340

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** I'm very proud that the McGuinty government is back in the housing business. We're now starting to see tangible results of our commitment to affordable housing, and I want to share with this House news of one such project.

I'm delighted to tell you that 14 families will soon have their dreams come true. In the very near future, they will be moving into a beautiful new townhouse on Savannah Drive in my riding of London North Centre. This project is the result of the vision, dedication and years of hard work and perseverance from some very dedicated people in London.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them and recognize their work. Sister Joan Atkinson, Reverend Susan Eagle and David Poole deserve special mention. They are the leaders of the London Affordable Housing Foundation, which comprises faith-based communities like the Sisters of St. Joseph and the United Church of Canada, along with community partners, including the Bank of Nova Scotia. They have formed a dynamic partnership to address the housing needs of those who need it most, and are committed to supporting the residents of this neighbourhood long after the moving trucks have driven away.

This project was supported by the city of London and \$453,000 from the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program. It was made possible because all levels of government worked together, shared a common vision and joined forces with a strong community partner. When all levels of government and the community work together, great things can happen. This project is definitely evidence of that.

#### CLINICAL SIMULATION EQUIPMENT FOR NURSES

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** The McGuinty government is investing \$10 million this year in clinical simulation equipment to help train nurses. Clinical simulators are anatomically correct, computer-run mannequins that are designed to exhibit signs and symptoms of injury or illness and responses to treatments just as a human does. Ontario is the first province to embrace this important innovation in nursing education.

But yesterday, the NDP's Howard Hampton attempted to make light of this. He said in the House to our minister, "You visited a school of nursing and held a photo op with some dummies. Now, according to the Canadian Press, the Ontario Nurses Association, after

watching this performance, suggested, 'You are the dummy.' They say that instead of holding photo ops with dummies, you should keep your promise to hire more nurses."

Well, maybe that was supposed to be entertaining or a little clever play on words, but the information is not correct. Yesterday, the ONA called the Minister of Health and said that they never made that comment to CP; in fact, what they said was, "The Ontario Nurses Association applauds the McGuinty government's \$10-million investment in clinical simulation equipment to improve the education of nurses."

"This is a positive step in the quality of training available to nursing students. This equipment will allow student nurses the opportunity to practise a variety of procedures." That was said by ONA president Linda Haslam-Stroud.

That is to set the record straight. This is only one part of the McGuinty government's health care renovation.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I wanted to take this opportunity to thank those people in my riding, particularly the private sector, who participated in the application for affordable housing. The last time I made a statement, I didn't have an opportunity to talk about the private sector. In this case, we have a non-profit-private sector called Y Homes. Y Homes is an organization that provides affordable housing for those people who need that type of housing.

Y Homes did an interesting thing. They worked with our local YM-YWCA, where our facility was, took the facility over and converted it into the Y Homes project, which was a successful applicant for the affordable housing program. On top of that, the private sector jumped in and also made a temporary home for the Y while it pursues its needs for creating a new Y.

This is an example of what the private sector, the non-profit sector and all government levels can do when they put their minds to providing us with not only affordable homes but recreational facilities for those kids who need them and for those people who buy into the Y theory of what it is and why they have these programs for children. Included, on top of that, was one more turn that I think is worthy of understanding: The city got involved in making sure that all three sectors of this particular broad stroke happened together. So my kudos to each and every one of those partners in that program.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on estimates.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker):** Mr. Jackson from the standing committee on estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries and offices be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006:

Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, vote 4001, infrastructure and growth management planning/ministry administration: \$262,003,600;

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, vote 1401, ministry administration: \$168,945,400.

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Dispense.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### LIQUOR LICENCE AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PERMIS D'ALCOOL

Mr. Tascona moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act /  
Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les permis  
d'alcool.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** This bill amends the Liquor Licence Act to require that beer sold in public premises under a licence issued under the act must be poured into unbreakable containers before being served to a member of the public on the premises. "Public premises" are defined to be premises to which the public has access, such as a restaurant, bar or stadium, whether or not a fee is payable for the access.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### FAMILY DOCTORS

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It is with great pleasure that I rise in my place today to speak about an important announcement made earlier today.

This morning, I had the privilege of announcing that this government is investing an additional \$33 million to help train more family physicians. Everyone knows that family doctors are in many ways the front line of medical care. For millions of people throughout this province, their family doctor is the face of the medical profession. But tragically, far too many people don't have a family physician. Many parts of the province are underserved,



and even in large urban centres, a lot of families have difficulty finding a family doctor. This government is taking action to address this problem.

In March of this year, we announced that we were increasing Ontario's supply of family doctors by creating 70% more family medicine residency positions at the province's five medical schools. Today, we moved further with this initiative, investing another \$10 million in capital funding and another \$23 million in operating funding to further expand family medicine teaching sites over the next three years.

The \$10 million in capital funding will be used for the construction of new hospital-, community- and university-based family medicine teaching sites associated with four medical schools: the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa, McMaster University and the University of Western Ontario.

Both Queen's University and Western received capital funding in March when we kick-started the expansion of the family medicine program.

We also invested a further \$23 million in operating funds at all five sites: U of T, Ottawa, McMaster, Western and Queen's. This operating funding will pay for the increased costs associated with training more family medicine residents over the next three years—things like salaries, educational opportunities for residents and their teachers, supplies and services, and administrative support.

This investment will create 141 new family residency positions in Ontario by 2006, and importantly, as a result of this investment, by 2008 there will be fully 337 more family doctors ready to serve Ontario families.

#### 1350

More family doctors mean more Ontarians with access to a family doctor. As a direct result of these new family residency positions, thousands of Ontarians who did not previously have access to a family doctor will now have one.

The medical students throughout Ontario who train as residents recognize that this is a major milestone for them and for the patients they serve. In fact, just this morning, Dr. Adam Natsheh, president of the Professional Association of Internes and Residents of Ontario, said the following:

"Today's announcement is a clear signal from the government of Ontario that family medicine is a highly valued field of medicine.... Increasing the supply of family doctors will help to increase access for so many families who do not have a family doctor today and will also help to alleviate the crisis that currently exists."

This is but one more piece of evidence that Ontario is once again a good place for doctors to practise medicine. That's good news for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, as you and other members of the House will know, this government has three key health care priorities: keeping people healthier by shifting the focus from illness care to health care; improving access to doctors and nurses; and fixing wait times and access for health care services.

Today's announcement is a big step toward more access to doctors, and I know all members of this chamber will join me in celebrating this important step forward.

## HEALTH PROMOTION

### PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

#### **Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):**

November 14 is Health Promotion Day here at Queen's Park, and my message to everyone here today is prevention. Regular medical checkups and early detection, coupled with leading a healthier lifestyle, are key to disease prevention. Today I welcome to Queen's Park representatives from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association and the Canadian Lipid Nurse Network. An array of tests, from glucose levels to blood pressure to cholesterol, were made available by these associations and enabled a number of our colleagues—I believe over 40 MPPs participated—together with members of the press gallery and Queen's Park staffers, to get tested.

Mon souhait est que cette journée soit la première de nombreuses journées de la promotion de la santé à Queen's Park, afin que nous puissions faire passer le message sur la prévention et son lien avec les modes de vie sains et actifs.

Our government is taking a holistic approach to health care. Whether it's the substantive expansion of community health centres, as announced last week by my colleague George Smitherman—and I want to take this opportunity to thank the minister for including Nepean community resource centre on the list and the good work that Patricia Pepper and others in that community are doing to expand the community health centre network in eastern Ontario—or removing junk food from elementary school vending machines, many ministries are working together to ensure that we break down the silos that sometimes plague governments and reduce our effectiveness in promoting wellness.

Je tiens à remercier encore une fois tous ceux qui nous ont aidé à réaliser cet événement.

I felt it was important to ensure that we lead by example and offer our colleagues, employees and media the opportunity to have these various tests conducted. Far too often in our sometimes busy lives, we put our own health and well-being to the side. Hosting Health Promotion Day complements a number of initiatives that our ministry has taken part in since it was created last June. It also provides me with an opportunity to share some of the things I have learned to date with my colleagues here in the Legislature.

First, Ontario has traditionally spent much more money to treat illness at the back end of the health care system rather than promoting wellness at the front end. This was supplemented by an OECD study last week that showed the governments around the world have taken that approach. We'll try to do things differently.

Second, our challenges in health and wellness in the 21st century include, among other things, a growing and aging population, rising obesity rates, and communities and workplaces which encourage sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy nutritional options.

Notre gouvernement a pris un engagement au plan de la santé de l'Ontario, et au plan de la santé des Ontariens.

This is essential if we are to prevent the onset of more serious diseases such as cancer, stroke, heart disease and diabetes among our citizens. The startling reality is that up to 50% of cancers in this country are preventable. Prevention is also key when it comes to obesity. In the last 25 years, there has been a 300% increase in the number of obese children, and in 2001, the estimated cost of obesity in Ontario was \$1.6 billion. Once people are overweight, they tend to gain even more weight. For example, almost one quarter of those in the national population health survey who had been overweight in 1994-95 became obese in 2002-03.

Ontarians with diabetes account for 30% of the strokes in this province. Strokes are the third leading cause of death in Ontario, and the leading cause of disability. More than 800,000 Ontarians have diabetes, and another 200,000 may be unaware that they have the disease, underscoring the need to get tested on a regular basis. I mentioned to my colleagues today at the health forum that we held just down the hall that when a similar day was held at the Quebec Legislature, there were approximately five members of the National Assembly in Quebec who discovered they had type 2 diabetes as a result of getting tested.

Experts from across the health care and wellness sectors—the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association and the Canadian Cancer Society—have commended Premier McGuinty for creating a standalone ministry and putting more emphasis on wellness, as opposed to simply illness. The Ministry of Health Promotion's priority areas—and I'm delighted that my colleague Peter Fonseca, who is taking an active role on a number of these files, is with us today—are smoke-free Ontario, sport and physical activity strategy, healthy weights, injury prevention and mental health and addictions.

Since the creation of the Ministry of Health Promotion in June, the government has done a number of things to promote healthy and active lifestyles among children and adults. A significant portion of the smoke-free Ontario campaign is committed to preventing smoking among young people. Not smoking is one of the most assured ways of preventing a host of unfortunate debilitating and costly illnesses. About a month ago, I was at Brock University with my colleague the Honourable Jim Bradley, and was extremely pleased to announce that our government has provided \$600,000 to support and expand the highly successful Leave the Pack Behind program.

Cette initiative, en partie, donnera aux étudiants et étudiants les outils nécessaires pour cesser de fumer.

We provided school boards in Ontario with nutritional guidelines to assist elementary schools in ensuring that

available food and beverage items are healthy choices. The health and well-being of all students is of great concern to this government. We're starting with elementary school students, as good eating habits are best learned early in life.

Just a few weeks ago, I helped launch a program in Minister Cordiano's riding with education minister Gerard Kennedy to ensure that every elementary school student in Ontario takes part in at least 20 minutes of daily physical activity as part of the government's overall healthy schools program. According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, over 50% of children aged five to 17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. Physical inactivity in this province costs \$1.8 billion in direct and indirect costs. Now elementary school kids can dance, jump, walk or leap their way to improved fitness for 20 minutes each day, and this is in addition to the physical education program in elementary schools. Promoting physical activity at this early stage will help to ensure that an active lifestyle is maintained throughout their lives, and assist in keeping people out of the health care system.

These are significant first steps—and they are just a few of the things we've done—but there's much more to do. To that end, I look forward to working with our partners, stakeholders and other levels of government to get the message across that healthy lifestyles and active living are good for business, taxpayers and Ontarians. In January, along with my parliamentary assistant, Peter Fonseca, I'll be hosting a series of round tables across the province to listen to and learn from local success stories on health promotion that have had a positive impact on communities.

Before I conclude, I'd like to leave you with a quote from Jan Kasperski from the Ontario College of Family Physicians regarding the creation and focus on health promotion:

"We were particularly delighted when the government indicated its intent to work closely with its health care partners, stakeholders and other levels of government on initiatives that target specific sectors of our society.

"That move underscored your government's understanding that the delivery of programs that promote healthy choices and healthy lifestyles can help Ontarians lead healthier lives."

I thank everyone in this chamber and in the Queen's Park precinct who took advantage of our health tests today, and congratulate you for taking charge of your health. Merci beaucoup.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Response?

1400

#### FAMILY DOCTORS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I would like to respond to the statement made today in regard to family physicians. Our government had recognized that there certainly was a need for an increase in



family physicians, had set up the task forces and had moved forward very aggressively to ensure that people in this province would have access to family physicians, including of course the establishment of the new medical schools.

I want to emphasize that the announcement today is simply a reannouncement of information that has already been provided to the public. In fact, this government has quite a habit of reannouncing many of their announcements many times.

I would like you to know, Mr. Speaker, that despite the hype, people in Ontario actually have less access to family physicians than ever before. The number of underserved areas in this province has increased in the last two years under this government. According to the Ministry of Health Web site, the number of underserved areas in Ontario has increased from 126 to 139 during the watch of this government. In addition, the number of physicians needed to serve patients has increased from 592 to 795. How does the government expect to reduce wait times when there are not enough doctors and specialists to serve patients in Ontario?

It's also important to note that despite the fact that the minister and the government continue to talk about these family health teams, and keep announcing these family health teams, about 50 of the original number of 69 were part of the family health networks we set up. It's also important to take into consideration, when you look at the definition of a family health team, that today there is actually only one family health team that is fulfilling the definition and is fully operational, which means, again, that patients do not have access to the primary health services this government mentions are available to them.

This government talks about focusing on keeping people healthier, shifting the focus from illness to health care. Well, the reality is that this is the government that cut funding for eye tests for a majority of people in Ontario. They cut out funding for chiropractic care. They cut out funding for physiotherapy. So what they say and what they do are two different things, and people today have less access than ever before.

Not only have they cut health services for people in Ontario, but although they said they weren't going to raise taxes, they have increased taxes more than any other government in the history of this province, including a new \$2.4-billion health tax that people in this province are now forced to pay—forced to pay—even though they are getting less service than ever before.

As far as fixing wait times is concerned, I can tell you, I've got a story here. In fact, I have a lot of letters from constituents who are telling me that wait times are not improving. Furthermore, if you're not one of the five designated wait times, you have no hope whatsoever. I have a constituent who said that she tore her ligament in October 2004. She had treatment. She was finally referred in June 2005 to see a specialist in January 2006, and she has now been told that after she sees the specialist, it will take a year or two before she gets her

surgery. Now, she can go to Quebec and get the surgery within a month and she is asking that OHIP provide coverage for that to happen.

So I think it's important to note that the wait time strategy—we don't really have one—is not working. If you're not one of the five designated areas where they're going to try to focus on a reduction, if you have any other procedure that's needed, you're not going to qualify anyway.

The reality is that despite the rhetoric we hear from this government, there is no increased access to doctors and nurses. In fact, this is a government that has fired 767 nurses and spent \$91 million to do so.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's statement, the reality in Ontario isn't that we don't have enough family residency spots; the problem we've got is that medical students aren't choosing family medicine as their first choice. Let's take a look at the statistics with respect to those family residency spots. In 2003, 39 of the family residency positions were left unfilled after the first iteration and 12 were left unfilled after the second iteration. In 2004, another 34 family residency positions were left unfilled after the first iteration. The problem is, the spots are there but medical students are not seeing family medicine as a viable option, and unless and until the government looks at what we can do to make family medicine more attractive, you can have all the new spots in the world and you won't be filling them. That's the problem the government has.

Now, what can the government do about that? They've been given a number of suggestions. Number one, the government can ensure that students at all medical schools in Ontario are given exposure to family medicine through lectures and clinical experience in the first year at medical school.

Secondly, the government can increase the prestige of family medicine as an academic specialty by funding more research by family docs, increasing the number of academic positions that are given to family doctors and increasing the percentage of classes in the undergraduate medical curriculum that are actually taught by family physicians.

Thirdly, the government can eliminate the current restrictions on retraining of family physicians. By doing so, the government would remove a barrier that is driving medical students away from family practice and directly into the specialties. It is true that if a family doctor were allowed to retrain, students in medical school would not feel trapped if they chose family medicine as an alternative, thinking that they may not be able to move to a specialty later on. What we need to do is ensure that there is a change made to the rotating internships for Canadian medical training, that we eliminate that and in effect remove that barrier which right now forces family physicians to make a choice about forgoing family practice because they are concerned that later on they won't be able to do retraining to go into a specialty.

Fourth, we can increase the exposure of medical students to training in multi-disciplinary environments, including community health centres.

Fifth, we can ensure that family health teams truly have an environment with a broad range of health care providers, to respond to the desire of more and more docs who are coming out of medical school (a) to work with a team and (b) to work reasonable hours so that their quality-of-life issues can be addressed. We need to ensure that family health teams recognize that and have the broad range of health care providers to allow that quality-of-life issue to be dealt with. We should look at disability insurance, extended health care benefits and pensions, all as mechanisms to again deal with that response to quality-of-life concerns that so many medical students have. If you put those in place, I think that many more medical students would choose family medicine as an option, because those issues would be addressed.

The NOW Alliance has many other suggestions which they have made to the government, responding to how to attract more medical students into family practice. I would urge this government to follow up, because if you don't do that, as I said, you can have all the spots in the world and they still will remain unfilled.

### HEALTH PROMOTION

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** With respect to the statement by the Minister of Health Promotion, we all know folks who exercised regularly, went for their regular medical checkups, had a healthy diet and still fell victim to strokes, to cancer and to diabetes. I guess I'm more concerned today about what the government is doing to deal with people who are trying to manage their lives after a stroke, with diabetes or with cancer.

I go back to a statement I made earlier this week with respect to the diabetes program in this province, for example. The Canadian Diabetes Association came to the pre-budget consultations and urged a major expansion in the monitoring for health program to help diabetics manage their diabetes. They asked this government to expand those individuals who could qualify for the program; to include items like syringes, needles and insulin pumps under that program; to make sure the reimbursement level of the supplies actually matched the cost of those supplies. The government didn't respond to any of those concerns or to any of those initiatives in the current budget cycle.

As I say, I'm far more interested in what the government is doing to deal with people who have strokes, cancer and diabetes so they can manage their lives with those diseases.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** I would like to welcome to the Speaker's gallery a delegation from Italy, from the province of Frosinone in the region of Lazio. Welcome.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### ENDING MANDATORY RETIREMENT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS POUR ÉLIMINER LA RETRAITE OBLIGATOIRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 211, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code and certain other Acts to end mandatory retirement / Projet de loi 211, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne et d'autres lois pour éliminer la retraite obligatoire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1411 to 1416.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Ramsay, David
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Rinaldi, Lou
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Bartolucci, Rick	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Bentley, Christopher	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bountrogianni, Marie	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Bradley, James J.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Sterling, Norman W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Meilleur, Madeleine	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chudleigh, Ted	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Colle, Mike	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Cordiano, Joseph	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Munro, Julia	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Oraziotti, David	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	Peterson, Tim	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry	Yakubski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pupatello, Sandra	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I would ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Peters has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice policy. Agreed? Agreed.



## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. We have not yet received an answer to our question of yesterday, so I'll try again on the basis that you might have some more information. Could you tell us how it is that an advertising firm with very close ties to your Liberal Party received \$6.3 million in business, a 6,000% increase for this company, from your Liberal government in your first year in office? Can you give us an explanation for that?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I can not only give you an explanation, but the executive director of the Advertising Review Board has put it in writing for you. He confirms that they made the decision completely independently. They say:

"I can confirm each was awarded on the basis of merit as determined by a panel consisting of a civil servant representative and two representatives from the Advertising Review Board. In each case, the rules were followed to the letter. There was no political involvement in the procuring of these contracts."

I will simply add that the decision, and the final decision, was made by three bureaucrats. One was 11 years as the executive director of the Advertising Review Board, one was three years as chair of the Advertising Review Board, and the other a civil servant from the Ministry of Health. This was done completely independently and the final decision was made by arm's-length bureaucrats on the basis of merit.

**Mr. Tory:** Let's check that against some of the other quotes. You folks should get your act together. I should tell you that last night's Lotto 6/49 jackpot was only \$4 million, which pales in comparison to the \$6.3-million jackpot for these friends of the Liberal Party. People want answers and the Premier, frankly, should be here to give them.

According to your own spokesperson, Minister, and I'll quote from the Toronto Star, "The decision typically involved the minister, his deputy, the communications director or a combination of them."

Will the Deputy Premier confirm whether any of the Ministers of Health, Citizenship and Immigration, Agriculture or yourself as Chair of Management Board were involved in the awarding of any part of these \$6.3 million in contracts to your Liberal friends, and whether anyone at all at any time from the Premier's office or any political staffers were involved? We've put in FOI requests on this. Tell us if any of these people were ever involved.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I think we're seeing the real Mr. Tory now. I will say to you that I asked specifically this morning. I said to the executive director, "Your decision, therefore, on the advertising agency was final?" He said yes. I said, "In every single case was your decision final?" He said yes. He said there was no political involvement. That is your answer. I would just suggest that

you may want to move on, Mr. Tory, rather than trying to continue to dig up some dirt where none, frankly, exists.

**Mr. Tory:** We would move on if it weren't for the fact that there are so many contradictions in 24 hours from this government.

Here's what you had to say about this yesterday. When you were asked about the specific advertising projects that your good friends, the friends of the Liberal Party, at Bensimon Byrne did for your government totaling \$6.3 million, you told reporters, and I quote, "Each of their projects were as a result of a competitive process." Your office went to great pains to confirm that yesterday, except that a Ministry of Health spokesperson yesterday told CBC Radio, and I quote, "there was no competition" held for a \$5.7-million contract given to your friends at Bensimon-Byrne.

Tell us exactly what competitive process was used here to hand out these contracts worth \$6.3 million to the firm that did your advertising in the last election. Tell us about it.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I'll tell you, the rules that we followed in that particular case were the exact same rules we inherited from your government. It was a competitive process. Every single agency on that vendor of record, every single agency, needed to go through a competitive tender to get on it and to sign the contract. That was the first competitive bid.

Secondly, those three people I talked to—and I remind you that the chair of that board was appointed by the previous Conservative government, and the executive director by the NDP government. Two of those three people made that decision. They were asked to find an agency for the Ministry of Health. They went through the entire list of agencies. They analyzed them, and in their judgment the best possible decision was the one they made and, as the executive director pointed out: absolutely no political involvement. That's the answer, Mr. Tory, and I do hope that you'll accept his word.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question.

**Mr. Tory:** It's some of the answers given here and all the comments given by the spokespersons that we're after.

I want to share with you another comment—

**The Speaker:** The question is to whom?

**Mr. Tory:** Oh, I'm sorry. It's to the Deputy Premier again.

I want to share with you what the same Ministry of Health spokesperson had to say about the \$5.7-million project that your friends at Bensimon Byrne did for them. Again, from CBC Radio, the ministry spokesperson said, "The agency was assigned to the ministry," and "There was no competition for the contract at that ministry."

Now, let's look at the facts. You said there was a competitive process. You've told us, notwithstanding that your own spokesperson said the minister and the deputy minister and the communications people are typically involved, that there was no political action. Your spokesperson said that, and the Ministry of Health said there

was no competition for the \$5.7-million project that they used the Liberal ad firm for and that they were assigned this company to do work for them.

Minister, who made the assignment to give this agency to the Ministry of Health, if that's how it happened? Who made the assignment?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** You must not be listening to the answer. The Advertising Review Board, the arm's-length, independent agency, made that assignment. I repeat, two of those three people—Laird Ross, the chairman of the Advertising Review Board, Bob Farnley, who is the executive director, and someone from the Ministry of Health—made that decision. That is how it works. I said to you that the Advertising Review Board makes the final decision. No political involvement; they make that decision. They, therefore, assigned that agency to the Ministry of Health on the basis of merit. The process is clear, unequivocal and without any political involvement.

**Mr. Tory:** Just to be clear, what we have here is you indicating to us that we have an ad firm here that just happened to do your ads in the last election, the famous "I will not raise your taxes" ads, surely in content the most massively deceptive in the history of Ontario politics. So we have—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock. I think we could find a better word.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** There is an offending word. I would hope that it would be withdrawn.

**Mr. Tory:** I withdraw that.

Surely these are among the most massively inaccurate ads in the history of advertising in Ontario. This is an ad agency that had their advertising business with this government go from \$99,000 the year before you were elected to \$6 million the year after you were elected. So I just want to have this clear now. You have been very careful in all of your references to refer to the final decision as being made by these people. Will you stand in your place and tell us today that there was no involvement by anybody political—a minister, a political staffer, anybody from the Premier's office—at any time in this process—any time, no political involvement at all—in causing their billings to go from \$99,000 to \$6 million in one year? Will you stand and tell us that?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I read you the statement from Mr. Farnley, 11 years as the executive director: "There was no political involvement in the procuring of these contracts. I can confirm each was awarded on the basis of merit as determined by a panel consisting of a civil servant representative from the client ministry and two representatives from the Advertising Review Board," which is an arm's-length agency of the government. "In each case, the rules in place were followed to the letter."

There was no political involvement in the awarding of these contracts, for the fifth time.

1430

**Mr. Tory:** Well, it's interesting. There are all these contradictory comments out there: There was a com-

petition; there wasn't a competition. Why should this statement be placed in any different context than all the others? Yesterday you said there was a competition. The Ministry of Health spokesperson said there wasn't. We've been told all kinds of things.

Why don't we get to the bottom of this? Will you stand up and tell us right now that you will make sure—we've asked for all the documentation related to all these ad contracts given to your friends in the Liberal Party who did your ads in the last election—\$6 million of taxpayers' money. Will you agree to expedite the process? Under freedom of information, as we all know, it takes months and months to get that documentation. Will you bring to this House on Monday all the documentation concerning all of this process, and then we can all see exactly what's going on here? Will you bring the stuff here?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** You're looking for something that's not even close to there. Again I say to you, read the letter. Here's what Mr. Farnley said: "I've reviewed the scoring for each competition and confirm that Bensimon Byrne received the highest score from the arm's-length panel for each contract they received."

You may choose to drag this agency through the mud, but I would simply remind you that we did more scrutiny here than you did when you hired the same agency to work for Rogers.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I can wait.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

New question.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. Before the election, Dalton McGuinty said, "We will require that all contracts signed by the government be subject to public scrutiny, including calls to tender," and "We will put the public interest ahead of political cronies."

Now we find that since the election the same company that produced the television ads for your election campaign has had a \$6.3-million increase in their advertising contracts, without tender.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Northern Development needs to withdraw that remark.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** Can you tell us, please, what happened to Dalton McGuinty's promises that there was going to be an open and transparent process, that everything would go to tender? What happened to those promises about not looking after your political cronies?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I repeat what I said earlier. The process that has been followed here has been without any political involvement. I would also say that we have an advertising act, that we've said we're going to refer



advertising spending to the auditor to look at and publish annually. So we're doing that.

I would simply say to the member opposite that the Advertising Review Board has confirmed no political involvement. They conducted a fair, transparent process. So I would say to the leader of the third party that you're heading nowhere with this. The process has been above-board and clean, and the decisions have been confirmed by the Advertising Review Board as without any political involvement.

**Mr. Hampton:** This is about Dalton McGuinty's promise that these big advertising contracts wouldn't go out without public tendering, that you were not going to pay off your political cronies à la what's going on in Ottawa with the Gomery Commission. You weren't going to do that.

I want to quote a question Dalton McGuinty asked: "It is my understanding that you were going to provide strong leadership over there; you were going to set high standards; you were going to do things differently from your predecessor." That's what Dalton McGuinty asked three years ago.

Tell me: untendered contract—the same advertising firm that did your ads for you during the election campaign suddenly gets a 6,000% increase in advertising contracts from the McGuinty government. That smells and looks like Dalton McGuinty looking after his political cronies. What does it smell and look like to you, Acting Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Just because you use those words doesn't mean that there's an element of reality in that. Again, I would say, what is the transparent process? All of these agencies must go through a bidding process to get on as a vendor of record.

**Mr. Hampton:** There was no bidding process.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Oh, yes, it is. You say it isn't, but you must go through a bidding process to get on the agency of record, where, then, there is a review done by the Advertising Review Board to select the proper one.

Frankly, in June 2004, we enhanced the procedure; we strengthened it; we made some significant changes. Those are now part of the ARB's procedures to make it an even more transparent process. The last thing we've done is our Advertising Act, where the spending for advertising would have to be referred to the Auditor General.

So, there are no untendered—every one of these has to follow a process where they are awarded on the basis of cost and on the basis of merit, and that's exactly what has been done here.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Sorry to correct you, Acting Premier, but this Advertising Act that was so important, you haven't even proclaimed it yet. It's not law, because the McGuinty government won't proclaim it. Don't cite to me a whole bunch of process. That's the process that you used to condemn under the Conservatives. You used to say—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Order. I need to be able to hear the leader of third party. Only one member has the floor at a time.

**Mr. Hampton:** Here's the reality: It was Dalton McGuinty who said, "We will put the public interest ahead of our political cronies." "We will require that all contracts signed by the government be subject to public scrutiny, including calls to tender."

My question to you, Acting Premier, is, will you table all of the documents associated with these bids and the processes by which your political cronies were selected for these lucrative government contracts? Will you make it public? Will you provide the public scrutiny that you promised, or is this another broken McGuinty promise?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I hate to bother you with process, but there is a process that the Advertising Review Board follows—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** This is a public—he's yelling because—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** But it is a fair, transparent process that the advertising review agency has followed here. It ensures that there is fairness in the selection and that the selection is done on the basis of merit. Furthermore, the Auditor General will have an opportunity to review, in detail, the expenditures.

We have substantially improved the process. No one is awarded a contract without going through the proper process, all of which took place. Furthermore, I repeat what Mr. Farnley has said: There was a fair process here with—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is to the Minister of Energy. But I wonder, where's the tender and where's Dalton McGuinty's promise?

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Are you asking the question of the Minister of Government Services?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** No competency to answer a question about government services.

**Mr. Hampton:** Speaker, are you trying to tell me how to write my questions?

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party would know that he has to address a question to the minister who is expected to answer that question. I'm sure you can find some help besides me.

1440

**Mr. Hampton:** My question to the Minister of Energy is, as of April 1, 2006, the McGuinty government intends to scrap the revenue cap on Ontario Power Generation's fossil fuel and secondary hydro revenues. All by itself, scrapping the hydro rate buffer will likely drive electricity rates up by another 15% or more. Can the

McGuinty government assure hydroelectricity consumers, businesses and industries struggling to pay their electricity bills now that you will keep that hydro rate hike buffer in place?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** To the honourable member's question, no decision has been made. The discussions are ongoing.

**Mr. Hampton:** Let me assure you of one thing, Minister, which you should know already: Any plan to scrap the hydro rate hike buffer will make an already very bad situation worse. It will make life more expensive for ordinary families already struggling to pay the hydro bill and it will shut more paper mills and more factories and kill more jobs and push more workers into unemployment and devastate entire communities.

But there is something the McGuinty government can do. You can commit here and now that you will lessen the blow of your punishing spring hydro rate increases by extending the hydro rate hike buffer for at least another two years. Will you do that now, Minister?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** What I will commit to is that all things will be taken under consideration.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, let me tell you what's at stake. You've got dozens of paper mills that are looking right now at whether they want to stay in business in Ontario. They're looking right now at where they're going to cut 100 jobs, 200 jobs, and they need a signal from the McGuinty government—not more photo ops, but a clear signal. They don't want to lay off another 42,000 manufacturing jobs, which has happened in the last year. So they're asking you, will you extend the hydro rate hike buffer for at least another two years and lessen the blow of the hydroelectricity rate increase that you're going to announce in the spring? Will you do that, and will you do it now, Minister?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** What I think I can commit to is that it's important to learn the history of the past; for example, the increase of 40% under the NDP government. As I recall, between 1990 and 1995 there were 14 mills that closed. So all things will be taken under consideration.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to return to the Deputy Premier. I just want to ask you to bear with me here. If all that has been said here is as it happened, in terms of the documents you've been reading from today—by the way, you keep referring to the fact that it has been sent to me; I don't have copy of it here—will you measure that against the optics we have here of a volunteer working on your election campaign in a very key post, saying that he had a relationship with the Premier, receiving a \$6-million contract of the taxpayers' money overnight? The firm goes overnight from \$99,000 to \$6 million. Can't you understand the optics here, especially in the wake of all that we've seen with the Adscam fiasco in Ottawa?

I would ask you this: If you're not willing to table all of the documentation so we can see it, in light of the contradictions between your spokesperson and you and other people, would you refer this matter to a committee and have these spokespeople—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. The Acting Premier.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** Just to help out a little bit, one thing you should be aware of is that there was another \$735,000 that this agency earned as a result of a contract awarded by the previous government, in the same fiscal year you're talking about.

I would say again to you that you have the process we have in place now; you've got it sitting right there. You have a confirmation from a well-respected civil servant, 10 and a half years on the job, telling you exactly what took place. I would make the assumption that you can take at face value what this civil servant has laid out for you in some detail. I think you can trust him. That should give you the answer you're looking for, that this process was fair, transparent and honest, with no political involvement. I think you should accept that.

**Mr. Tory:** If the process was fair, open and transparent, with no political involvement, as you just said—I just got this letter handed to me now and I'll read it with care—why would you have any objection whatsoever to agreeing that you will bring all the documents concerning the process described in this letter to this Legislature and not make everybody wait six months, or as I suggested a minute ago, refer it to a committee? If it's all as you say it is and as this gentleman says it is, will you agree to make those documents public, and to make these people including your spokesperson, Ciaran Ganley, who told quite a different story than you, available so all of us can see that what you're saying is exactly in accord with those documents?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Well, I have done it. You have the process. You've got it all there. It's attached to the letter I sent you, step by step, what takes place. You have the word of our civil service. I've reviewed the scoring for each competition to confirm that they received the highest score from an arm's-length panel for each contract they received. I think the Leader of the Opposition should read that letter carefully, and should recognize that it's from a respected civil servant with a very fine reputation. Someone called Laird Ross, a respected chair appointed by the previous government—your government—was in on this decision as well. The process has been fair, transparent, honest and without political involvement, as laid out in that letter, and the process is attached. I think that gives it to you. I think you now know exactly what took place.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. Jim Leslie was here earlier. Laura McCallum is still in the gallery right now. Jim was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2002. He's had numerous surgeries and chemotherapy. Recently the cancer was



found in his rib cage, so he needs treatment again. Laura was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2001. She's had a stem cell transplant and chemotherapy. She was lucky enough to participate in a hospital trial in Hamilton in 2005, so she's in remission. What they both have in common is that the chemotherapy drugs they need have been approved by Health Canada but not approved in Ontario. What they both need is a process here in Ontario for their oncologist to request special consideration to get Erbitux and Velcade for them even while the drug review is underway.

Minister, will you adopt a policy for exceptional access to chemotherapy drugs so that Jim and Laura and other patients like them can get the treatment they need, when they need it?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the challenging question related to the provision of drugs in a public health care environment. As is well known, and as I've had a chance to say in this House, overall the new drug funding program is up 1400% since 1997. In fact, through the actions of our government, we've made bigger investments in that program than through all of those Conservative increases over seven years. Notwithstanding that, there is of course a new product made available every single day. The products the honourable member mentions are before the Drug Quality and Therapeutic Committee.

To the policy question she asks, I've commented before that our current drug strategy review is looking at that. But in her supplementary, I'd like the honourable member to confirm what she said in answer to the media today, which is that she doesn't believe that the effectiveness of a drug—that there should be any consideration of how the drug works, but rather all of these products should and can be funded just on the basis of compassion. I'd rather suggest to the honourable member that in an environment where there are 22,000 drugs, I think the public health care system would quickly collapse under the honourable member's logic.

**Ms. Martel:** That is entirely untrue. I said at the press conference today that this province needs a process for special consideration for drugs while the review process is underway. That's what my press release says, that's exactly what I said and that is exactly the question I am asking you today.

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Minister, while your drug review process goes on and on, Jim needs Erbitux now. His cancer has come back. He needs treatment now. He and his wife are being forced to go to the Roswell clinic in Buffalo to see about treatment there. They're prepared to spend \$15,000 a month for six months to get Erbitux in the United States because they can't get it here.

I ask you again, as I stated at the press conference this morning, when will your government adopt a policy for special consideration for access to chemotherapy drugs that are still under review, so that Jim and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I doubt very much that the honourable member is going to like it, but her very response confirmed what I said, which is that it is her policy and apparently the policy of her party that Ontario can be in a position where any drug therapy or presumably any service that isn't offered anywhere in the world, that has not been properly evaluated, should automatically be provided because a request was made. This is the honourable member who today would not answer a question in a fiscal context, only in a compassionate or humanitarian context.

All I say to the honourable member, who resided over a reduction in a government ministry that started with \$350 million and ended up at \$200 million, is that she has forgotten all of those necessary lessons associated with the challenge and responsibility of being in government; and that is to make sure, for the integrity of a public health care system, that we evaluate the quality of a product that is available before we're in a position to make a determination about whether a public health care system can support it. That is the scientific basis of our system. It was when you were in government. It was—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. The winter months are upon us, and that means skating and snowmen, but it also means people have to heat their homes. Some of us don't have to worry about turning on the heat so we can keep warm inside, but that isn't true for low-income earners in this province. When the cold months come, low-income earners worry about how they will pay their bills, choosing between food and heating. This is unacceptable. People shouldn't have to choose between food and heating their homes. Minister, what are we doing to help those low-income earners keep warm this winter?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** This is one area where I think everyone in this House is very concerned. I can tell you that the former Minister of Energy, currently the Minister of Finance, made this a priority, and I was given the responsibility to work with the senior policy adviser on developing a program and a process around accumulating the information to deal with low income. We did that, as well as getting the conservation bureau up and going, and the first priority was to provide a directive to develop a low-income program.

In the interim, a number of local distribution companies or utilities are actually providing low-income assistance. They have a variety of programs. They have made decisions where they will not cut off hydro. Gas companies have made similar decisions. They have provided a myriad of opportunities for savings in terms of things they can do. There are things being undertaken, and I can tell you, it's in Newmarket, it's in Wawa, and it's in northern—we're working together to leverage dollars with EnerCan. There's a program—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Fonseca:** That's great. I'm glad to hear that we're paying such close attention to this matter and helping people who need it most.

Cold Canadian winters are much like our blistering summers in that we use more energy than we do during the spring and fall months. What can Ontarians do over the winter months to help keep their heating bills down? What conservation methods can average Ontarians easily adapt to their homes so that we can see direct energy savings?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** There are a number of things. I would like to mention one in particular for northern Ontario, which is with Hydro One, where in fact qualifying individuals can leverage up to \$3,000—and I believe it's now up to about \$4,200—with EnerCan and Hydro One, where they can actually replace their windows, their doors, do weather stripping—more concrete, sustainable things in their homes. Also, many utilities will provide an energy audit of the home to see where the problems lie. But simple things such as making sure of the caulking around your windows, using your drapes and programmable thermostats are the types of things that can be used.

Look to your local utilities. There is \$160 million worth of programs out there that the utilities are using to help. A lot of them are targeted at low-income folks. We have also put together, with social housing, a program for 5,000 houses across the province.

#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is for the Minister of Health. On Monday, you refused to respond to a question about your hidden health agenda. I'm going to ask you again: Will you confirm that you are reducing community care access centres from 42 to 14?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm very happy to have an opportunity to confirm to the honourable member that long-standing work is underway to build a system where a system has not existed so far; that is, a health care system that has the capacity to deliver on the most essential benefit of a public health system, which is equitable distribution of resources.

The circumstance we have in Ontario today is that across the breadth of 42 community care access centres, we have a different range of services being provided. This is the inequitable circumstance we have inherited. We also have a circumstance, related to community care access centres, where that government took away their local community governance, something we think is a very important principle of our solutions in Ontario.

I can confirm for the honourable member that work is underway. I look forward to an opportunity soon to be able to brief her and other members of the Legislature with respect to the efforts our government is taking to build a system that can deliver this public benefit in an

equitable fashion for Ontarians regardless of where they make their home.

**Mrs. Witmer:** Let me say to the minister that by reducing these community care access centres from 42 to 14, you really will be eliminating the opportunity for the local community to have any input to decision-making, because you're going to have Ottawa and all these other communities with totally different interests.

I know that your colleagues on management board have had a lot of concern about this whole plan—LHINs and everything else—and some of the costs involved. We have learned that your plan for CCAC consolidation will cost about \$100 million for severance, legal costs and wage harmonization. Can you tell us if you have conducted an independent analysis of the real cost of CCAC consolidation? Have you submitted these costs to cabinet, and if so, can you confirm the cost?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I can't confirm these numbers. I'm pretty sure they are a figment of someone's imagination.

I can say that the work we're doing within government is to seek to gain the support of cabinet and the government for initiatives to transform Ontario's health care system. To date, my colleagues have been very supportive of our initiatives to make sure we have a health care system in Ontario that is able to deliver an equitable result and to move forward in a fashion which takes genuine power of the Minister of Health and presses that down to the community, closer to the action, so that people who are living in those local communities can exercise important judgments over the health care system, which is, after all, an asset of the people of Ontario. It's a public asset, and we seek to be the government that restores the public's voice in it. We will not be continuing in a fashion that the honourable member advanced as Minister of Health, when she robbed communities of the power to manage community care access centres.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** I have a question for the Minister of Labour. Today in Windsor, friends and family attended the funeral of Lori Dupont, a nurse and the single mother of an eight-year-old girl, who, as you know, was stabbed to death on the job over the weekend. She had feared for her safety for some time and had applied for a peace bond, which she never got. So every day, she was forced to work in fear and in danger until she was tragically murdered.

Minister, Theresa Vince was murdered at her workplace in 1996, and yet Ontario still has not brought sexual harassment under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as recommended by a coroner's inquest. In light of this most recent murder, will you agree now to take those steps immediately?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for the question. I think all of us extend our condolences to the Dupont family in the tragedy that has



taken place in the municipality of Windsor. I think it's important for you to understand that this government does not tolerate any sort of violence in the workplace, and nor has any government that has served this province.

As you know, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers are required to take reasonable precautions to protect all workers from violence in the workplace. We encourage all employers to undertake a comprehensive review of their internal policies. The Ministry of Labour does go out and investigate complaints of incidents of violence within the workplace. When an act of violence does occur, as defined under the Criminal Code, the police are the lead investigating authority.

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**Ms. Churley:** Sadly, experts say that doesn't work. In Ontario, workers have the right to refuse unsafe work when it involves equipment, but women like Lori Dupont who know that their lives are at risk from dangerous co-workers don't have that right. They have to keep working even if it gets them killed. Michelle Schryer, executive director of the Chatham-Kent Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, has said that had there been "effective legislation in place to help protect women from sexist violence at work, the hospital would have been able to take additional steps to protect Lori at work."

I'm asking you again, Minister, will you support the changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that I proposed in my private member's bill over a year ago that would protect women from workplace harassment and perhaps actually save their lives?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** I appreciate the question and I'll respond to the supplemental. Workplace violence policies and procedures within the Ministry of Labour operational policies and procedures manual outline specific procedures for Ministry of Labour inspectors to follow when dealing with complaints about workplace violence. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. We're constantly reviewing those policies. As I said earlier, we investigate all complaints associated with workplace violence. Where it's associated with work responsibilities, orders are issued. As well, in Ontario, psychological harassment, verbal abuse and other forms of harassment that are not addressed under the Occupational Health and Safety Act are covered under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I have a question today for the Minister of Community and Social Services. First, I'd like to congratulate the minister. All members of the House will know that as of September 1, 2005, the Ministry of Community and Social Services was given responsibility for the accessibility unit, which is comprised of the recently passed legislation, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Minister, I know that even prior to taking on that responsibility, you've always been an advocate for accessi-

bility issues and ensuring that as a government we work toward removing barriers for people with disabilities to allow for the equal inclusion of all individuals in our society. In my riding of Oakville, my constituents have told me how thrilled they are that we made sure that our legislation went much further than that of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act introduced by the previous government.

Minister, would you please tell the House today what your ministry is doing for Ontarians with disabilities now that you have taken over the accessibility unit?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. He really is a leader, not just here in this House but, as well, in the work he's doing in his own constituency office to become more and more accessible. I think we should use the fine office in Oakville as a potential model for all of the constituency offices across the province. There is some very good news coming out of Oakville on accessibility.

Let me say how pleased I am to have accepted the accessibility directorate into the Ministry of Community and Social Services. It is a fine fit. We are working over the next 20 years to have five-year milestones to reach total accessibility. The huge task ahead of us will be divided up into standard development committees. I would be pleased to give more description of that. As well, we are now launching an advisory committee to the minister in the development of those standards for the province. It will include both the private sector as well as the public sector.

**Mr. Flynn:** It's clear that your ministry is moving forward to ensure that every Ontarian is treated with fairness and dignity and that we eliminate the barriers that those with disabilities face.

On October 17, you announced how the McGuinty government is making Ontario more accessible to people with disabilities with the development of two new province-wide committees that will work to develop new proposed standards to improve accessibility in Ontario.

Interest groups in my riding of Oakville have expressed to me that they would like to participate in some way toward making Ontario more accessible. I'm pleased to see this initiative, obviously, and I'm pleased to see that this initiative will give them an opportunity to do so. Minister, could you specifically tell us what these two committees are focusing on and what the current status is of the committees?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** In addition to this advisory council to the minister on the standards, we are launching two standards development committees first. Of those two, one is very sector-specific, regarding transportation, and the second is on customer service.

Most people will know that one of the largest barriers facing people with disabilities is transportation. It is one of the areas where we have some excellence around the province, and I hope we'll be able to move quickly to standards development in the transportation sector. The

second area is customer service, and that cuts across the broad breadth of everyday living—individuals, private businesses, public places—and we know that if we can set the right level of standards in customer service, it will be of enormous benefit, have an enormous impact on accessibility for people with disabilities.

We are committed to this. We are going to do this well, and I welcome people to participate in this process.

### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Despite the new health care tax you've levied on the people of Ontario, they are still facing serious problems accessing health care. In communities across Ontario, there are still many thousands of individuals and families who are unable to find a family doctor. These are orphaned patients. In my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, there are tens of thousands of orphaned patients. They need access to health care now. These orphaned patients cannot properly access health care services. Minister, when are you going to help these orphaned patients get the health care they need?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It's a very interesting question, coming as it does on a day when I've announced a significant increase in the size of our family residency programs, made possible because of the work that our government is doing to renew comprehensive family care. But it's an even more interesting question coming from an honourable member who might have more appropriately stood in her place and said thank you for the investments that were made, as our government announced just last week to bring two community health centres to her riding, to the patients in Minden and Brock township.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'm sorry. Now I'm in trouble over here.

Those important investments are in addition to the family health team that we've announced for Haliburton, which I had the privilege of attending at, alongside the honourable member.

The evidence is very, very clear that our government believes it's fundamentally important that we deliver primary care reform in a fashion that accesses more care for more patients. Accordingly, our commitment to build 39 additional community health centres, to build 150 family health teams, 69 of which are on their way to full completion, is very apt evidence that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Scott:** The family health teams are supposed to provide improved access to care in order to improve health outcomes. It's the family health teams in my riding that are asking the questions. Are the orphaned patients who do not have family doctors going to be able to access other services available through the family

health teams? They've been asking your ministry and no one has been able to tell them. Will the orphaned patients be able to use the comprehensive chronic disease prevention and management programs? Will they be able to access the health promotion programs and social workers? Will they be able to book appointments with a physiotherapist and obtain dietitian counselling? Minister, does being an orphaned patient without a doctor exclude someone from accessing the services of the other health care professionals who are part of the family health teams?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** By its very nature, the interdisciplinary approach is to provide a comprehensive array of services to patients. The team approach is particularly effective in those environments where patients have underlying challenges: chronic health conditions like asthma or diabetes, or related to aging, as an example, where they have a complex range of needs. Accordingly, family health teams are coming to life in the province of Ontario in a variety of different ways, and many of the questions you ask are best answered locally. We have determined that it's appropriate not to be overly prescriptive but rather to allow family health teams to emerge depending on the population health basis. In some cases, that will mean that they're targeted toward seniors who need this array of services; in other cases, maybe toward younger families where a midwife might more appropriately be part and parcel of the team.

Accordingly, people in communities all across Ontario can expect that this government will be the one that meaningfully addresses orphan patients who were created by your government and that one over there.

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### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** I have a question for the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, in the wake of your refusal to take action on skyrocketing property taxes and mysterious methods of assessment, the NDP today launched a task force on assessment and tax reform. Now, in opposition, you said that the system needed to be changed; in fact, you made that commitment to Ontario's property owners. We all remember the harsh words you had for the Tory system. Will you admit today that the property tax system is broken and tell us what you are going to do immediately to fix it?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** As the member opposite is aware, Monsieur Morin has launched a review. Our government has offered its full participation in this, to look at MPAC and what the challenges are. We look forward to his recommendations.

We continue to have representations made to us by citizens in the province, by members of our caucus, all of whom are contributing, I would say, to our understanding of where there may in fact be challenges. We look



forward to any and all dialogue involving this issue. We look forward to Monsieur Morin's report back to this House. We look forward to hearing whatever plans come forward, so that they can be reviewed in a proper context and full understanding of implications of whatever undertakings may or may not be recommended by any number of organizations and individuals looking at this most important issue.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, I remind you again, when you were in opposition, you protested against the municipal property assessment system that the Harris government brought in.

I want to tell you, Minister, that residents in the east end, in Toronto–Danforth and Beaches–East York—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** Trinity–Spadina.

**Ms. Churley:** —and Trinity–Spadina are very hard hit, some as high as 40%.

We are talking about seniors. We are talking about struggling young families. We are talking about people who cannot afford this. Instead of moving to change the system, you've chosen to continue with it and pass the buck.

Today, the New Democrats, I remind you again, showed leadership that you're not showing and took the initiative that should have come from you. I'm going to ask you: Will you at least commit to seriously considering the recommendations made by the NDP task force?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** In 1990, that member campaigned to reform the property tax system. They said they were going to reform property tax, replace it. What did they do? Nothing. For five years you allowed the system to degenerate.

Now, let's hear who has been appointed to this task force. Are there any experts in property tax reform on it? No. Is there anybody involved who's had any involvement in anything other than the NDP? No.

Let's see what the media had to say about this little task force. The media suggests, and I concur, that this is simply an attempt to build a mailing list for the next election. That was one of the questions.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to retract something I said yesterday. Yesterday, I said the NDP voted against \$125 tax credit for seniors. In fact, they voted against a potential \$625 property tax credit for seniors. Your record is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. The Minister of Finance will take his seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members are waiting to ask questions. Thank you.

#### TRADE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, you were part of this government's recent trade

mission to China, which was led and organized by our Premier, Dalton McGuinty. The purpose of this mission was to foster strong ties of trade and friendship with China, a country whose economy is one of the fastest growing in the world. While the United States is, and will most likely continue to be, our largest trading partner for years to come, it is important for Ontario to expand our trade circles and take full advantage of the opportunities provided by emerging world economies, with China being one of the most prominent. Minister, could you provide us with some detail on this trade mission and its successes?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I'd like to thank the good member for Ottawa–Orléans for the question. I want to report to this House that the recent trade mission to China that the Premier led was a real success. As members may be aware, China is now our second-largest trading partner, so this is a very important relationship that we are establishing. I would like to say that under the able leadership of the Premier, we were able to make the case that Ontario should be the gateway to the North American marketplace for Chinese investment, and that the relationship needs to be two-way. We made the case that now is the time for Chinese companies looking to invest in North America to look to Ontario. There are many opportunities in the life sciences sector, the information, communications and technology sector, and of course the auto sector. We made that case, and there is a great deal of work that needs to be done to follow up on this trade mission, but indeed the mission was a real success.

**Mr. McNeely:** Thank you, Minister. It pleases me greatly to know how dedicated and innovative this government is in pursuing economic opportunities to benefit the province. Ontario itself has a great deal to offer in terms of investment and business: a hard-working, multilingual labour force, an abundance of resources and unlimited potential. Minister, could you inform us what steps were taken on this trade mission and what steps will continue to be taken by this government to ensure that when China and other countries are considering investment opportunities in Ontario, they remember to look to the east, to Ottawa, to Kanata and to Orléans?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** I want to reiterate the importance of two-way trade and investment. Investment attraction is very important in the relationship, because investment then leads to additional trade opportunities. I believe this relationship we've established with China can now flourish as a result of the opportunities being opened for investment.

Eastern Ontario is no exception. Indeed, eastern Ontario is a great place for the Chinese to look to invest in the information, communications and technology sector, which Ottawa can boast is a prime location. We made that clear to many companies in China over the past 10 days. We had interest from pharmaceutical companies, as well, looking to invest in Ontario. Life sciences is an important sector that's flourishing right here in the greater Toronto area. Eastern Ontario, as I say, is blessed

with a great workforce in the information, communications and technology sector, and we will continue to make that case for eastern Ontario. Thanks to the member for the question.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** My question is to the Minister of Health. In the first week of May, Doug Emerson, advocating on behalf of his father who had multiple myeloma, spoke with Peter Finkle, the director of hospitals branch in your ministry, who admitted there is a gap in the current delivery of treatment for cancer patients waiting for IV drugs that are under review. Within 24 hours, he picked up the telephone, stepped in and directed Princess Margaret Hospital to provide treatment for Doug's father, John Emerson.

Minister, there are five other cancer patients in the chamber with us this afternoon who have multiple myeloma and require Velcade. Why is it that your ministry decided that that patient, Mr. Emerson, should get treated and yet today you turned your back on those multiple myeloma patients?

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**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** And how is it I've turned my back? By providing services in exactly the same way that your government did?

**Mr. Jackson:** Minister, your bureaucrat made a decision. The federal government has approved this medication. There are inconsistencies in both your approach as the minister and the way in which your ministry is handling this file.

I'll ask you again: Why is it, not only that your ministry picks up the telephone and directs a hospital to provide the care, but when that treatment is over, that same ministry is now telling Princess Margaret Hospital it's not going to pay for the treatment and you've stranded that hospital, as you've stranded hundreds of multiple myeloma patients in this province?

Minister, there are treatments that you're paying for in the United States for colorectal cancer patients from Ontario and there are patients whom you're denying. You're doing the same thing with multiple myeloma. When are you going to be consistent and have a consistent approach so that cancer patients can rely on the treatment in this province which, quite frankly, is falling apart under your watch?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** With all due respect to the member's rather direct advocacy related only to cancer drugs, his suggestion that the cancer treatment system we have in this province is falling apart is not just a slanderous comment to the government, but one directly to the hundreds and thousands of people who every day are dedicating themselves to enhancement of our cancer treatment system in the province.

The government of Ontario, which I'm very, very proud to be part of, with respect to new cancer drug funding, as an example, has in two short years increased

that funding by more than your party did for eight years while in government. And with all due respect to your questions with respect to process, the processes we're following are virtually identical to those that were followed by your government, which is the view that it is necessary to establish an evidence basis with respect to the provision of drugs in Ontario. We will continue to provide that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

### TTC SERVICE

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Earlier this week, the member from Scarborough Centre told the Scarborough Mirror, "If the city can reach consensus on it for a vision for a subway for Scarborough, I think it's something the province would certainly want to play a part in..."

Minister, how much money is your government setting aside for the new Scarborough subway? Can we expect it in the budget? If the member is wrong, can you tell me and this House that he does not speak for your government?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** This must be a very important question that it ended up last on the list, from this member. But let me assure you we will look at any proposal that the city will submit, and we will work with them.

### PETITIONS

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** [Failure of sound system]

"Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

"Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

"Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

"Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables



oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients.”

This has my signature of support.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to read in the following petition on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration,” known as wet, “there are other forms of macular degeneration,” known as dry, “that are not covered,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most individuals and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I'm pleased to sign this petition and show my support for it.

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

I agree with that petition.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular de-

generation (wet), there are other forms of macular degeneration ... that are not covered,

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most constituents and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I agree with this petition and also put my signature on it.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I affix my signature.

#### SERVICES AUX PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell):** J'ai une pétition ici qui contient 542 signatures.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Sujet : sous-financement des salaires des employés travaillant auprès des personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle.

« Attendu que sans appui adéquat, les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle sont souvent incapables de participer efficacement à la vie de leur communauté et sont privées des avantages de la société dont jouissent les autres citoyens;

« Attendu que l'offre de services de soutien de qualité dépend de la capacité d'attirer et de retenir des travailleurs compétents;

« Attendu que les salaires des travailleurs qui fournissent du soutien et des services communautaires peuvent être jusqu'à 25 % moins élevés que ceux des

personnes qui accomplissent les mêmes tâches dans des établissements gérés par le gouvernement et d'autres secteurs;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario examine la question prioritaire du financement des organismes communautaires du secteur des services aux personnes ayant un handicap de développement, dans le but de trouver des solutions à l'insuffisance des salaires du personnel et de faire en sorte que les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle continuent de recevoir le soutien et les services de qualité dont elles ont besoin pour pouvoir vivre une vie utile et constructive au sein de leur collectivité. »

1530

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Culture recently announced that there would be funding cuts totalling more than \$1.2 million from Ontario public library services; and

"Whereas over 69 million people visited public libraries in Ontario in 2003, with more than 100 million items circulating; and

"Whereas these cuts will impact you as a library user, resulting in delays in how often your library receives new books;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture restore the ... funding for Ontario public library services so that our library can continue to promote literacy in our community."

I agree with the petition and want to thank the Collingwood Public Library for sending it to me.

### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the so-called Tenant Protection Act of the defeated Harris-Eves Tories has allowed landlords to increase rents well above the rate of inflation for new and old tenants alike;

"Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (ORHT) created by this act regularly awards major and permanent additional rent increases to landlords to pay for required one-time improvements and temporary increases in utility costs and this same act has given landlords wide-ranging powers to evict tenants; and

"Whereas our landlord, Sterling Karamar Property Management, has applied to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to add a fourth high-rise unit to our compound in order to circumvent city of Toronto restrictions on density and the city's opposition to its project;

"Whereas this project would lead to overcrowding in our densely populated community, reduce our precious green space, further drive up rents and do nothing to solve the crisis in affordable rental housing;

"Whereas this project will drive away longer-term tenants partially shielded from the ... rent increases, thereby further reducing the number of relatively affordable units in the city core;...

"We, the undersigned residents of Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To institute a rent freeze until the exorbitant Tory guideline and above-guideline rent increases are wiped out by inflation;

"To abrogate the ... 'Tenant Protection Act' and draw up new landlord-tenant legislation which shuts down the notoriously pro-landlord ORHT and reinstates real rent control, including an elimination of the Tory policy of 'vacancy decontrol';" and finally,

"To keep the ... government to its promise of real changes at the OMB, eliminating its bias toward wealthy developers and enhancing the power of groups promoting affordable housing, sustainable neighbourhoods and tenant rights."

I will present this to you, Mr. Speaker, through our page Cara.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition signed by good citizens of Cambridge, which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Save Our Hospital

"Whereas the \$80-million expansion of Cambridge Memorial Hospital was approved in 2002 pursuant to the mandate of the Health Services Restructuring Commission; and

"Whereas the plans for the project have been in the works for the past two years; and

"Whereas the residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries, the city of Cambridge and the region of Waterloo have contributed their share of the project; and

"Whereas the decision to cancel the expansion will adversely affect and diminish health care in Waterloo region;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Resolved that the McGuinty government reverse its decision to cancel the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion and hospital upgrades."

I affix my name thereto.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to partici-



pate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I agree with the petition, and I've signed it.

### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation. It reads as follows:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

"Whereas TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge;

"Whereas this bridge ... will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will have only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

### LESLIE M. FROST CENTRE

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** "Recommendations for the Frost Centre

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government announced the closure of the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre in July 2004 with no public consultation; and

"Whereas public outrage over the closure of the Frost Centre caused the government to appoint a working

committee of local residents to examine options for the future of the property; and

"Whereas the working committee has completed their consultations and has prepared recommendations for the provincial government that include a procedure to follow during the request for proposals process; and

"Whereas the Frost Centre has been an important educational resource for the community, and continued use of the facility for educational purposes has wide-spread support;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should retain public ownership of the Frost Centre lands and follow the recommendations of the working committee regarding the request for proposals process."

Signed by hundreds of people from my riding, and I affix my signature.

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 55, I want to rise and give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Monday, November 21, in the afternoon, second and third reading of Bill 197, the Budget Measures Act.

On Tuesday, November 22, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 18, Budget Measures Act (No. 2), and in the evening, second reading of Bill 21, Energy Conservation Responsibility Act.

On Wednesday, November 23, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 27, the Family Statute Law Amendment Act, and the evening to be confirmed.

On Thursday, November 24, in the afternoon, second reading of Bill 18, the Budget Measures Act (No. 2), and in the evening, second reading of Bill 210, the Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act.

1540

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures, when Bill 197 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may then be immediately called; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of

this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Mr. Caplan has moved government notice of motion number 30.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'm pleased to rise to speak to government motion number 30. It is, in fact, what we call here in the Legislature under the standing orders a time allocation motion. I'm very proud, by the way, of the record of our government. I expect over the course of this debate you will hear some hue and cry and a lot of noise from both opposition parties about how undemocratic or awful time allocation motions are. So I thought off the top I would remind all members of the Legislature of some of the history related to time allocation in this particular House.

Of course, all members would remember back in the early 1990s, time allocation in fact was introduced by then House leader Shelley Martel of the New Democratic Party, and passed by Dave Cooke, the House leader of the New Democratic Party, as well. In fact, the NDP did set the trend for these kinds of motions. They used time allocation and these kinds of procedures about five times more than the previous Peterson government. You know, there were no public hearings when the NDP ripped up collective agreements with their social contract. There was no time allotted for third reading debate. There were no public hearings when the NDP raised gasoline taxes, for example, 3.4 cents a litre during some of their budgetary measures. In fact, in contrast to that, this time allocation motion deals with Bill 197, a budget bill of the government, that was introduced back last May in this House. It has already had significant debate in this Legislature.

But I don't want to just leave the New Democrats alone, because there is a significant history with the Conservative Party as it relates to time allocation motions. In fact, the Eves government, with which most members across the way are very familiar, in the last session of the Parliament of Ontario used time allocation on 83% of all government bills that received royal assent. From 1999 to 2003, the Harris-Eves government used time allocation on 67 of 110 government bills that received royal assent, or 61% of the time.

I want to contrast that with the record of our government. This is the ninth time that we have introduced and used a time allocation measure. We've introduced 71 government bills, and passed 52 of them. I think you can see that there is quite a large difference between the way that both previous governments used these measures in the standing orders and the way that our government is using them, because we do not take time allocation lightly. We treat this as a very serious matter, and really as a measure of last resort. But it doesn't just end there.

In the eight years of the Harris-Eves government, there was never any more than three days of second reading debate for any budget bill. I'm going to find some of the opposition howling rich, when we discovered that time allocation, for every budget that was introduced since 1998, was a standard course of events in this House. In fact, Speaker, I know you would be very interested that in the very first budget, where welfare rates were slashed 21.6%, where one third of the Ministry of Environment staff were laid off, where education funding was slashed, cut, guillotined, by \$400 million, and the effect that that had on children right across this province was devastating and well documented—\$400 million additionally was cut from colleges and universities. I'm going to highlight that with what is in Bill 197, because it's quite a different story. And over half a billion were dollars literally taken, cut from municipalities.

I want to compare and contrast that record and the use of time allocation to limit any type of debate—to prevent any kind of discussion in this Legislature—with the way our government has progressed.

As I said, this is the ninth time over the course of two years that our government has used time allocation. As I did say, we've introduced 71 bills; 52 have been passed. I want to be very clear that I, and certainly members of our government, will not treat this House with the kind of disrespect we saw evidenced by a budgetary speech being held outside this Parliament—the now infamous Magna budget—and time allocation will only be used for major legislation when there is time sensitivity.

Now, in thinking about this motion, I would like to move an amendment deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor—if I could have one of the pages come, I'll give them a copy of the amendment as well.

The amendment reads as follows: "That at 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and".

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Caplan has moved an amendment, as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor:

"That at 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and".

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'm very pleased to move that amendment. I want to provide opportunities for all members of the House to have debate at third reading.

In fact, Bill 197, the budget bill, contains some absolutely terrific measures for the people of Ontario as relates to the budgetary policies that have been endorsed by this Legislature. Some of them are quite well known; for example, our historic \$6.2-billion investment in our



post-secondary sector, in training, colleges and universities. In fact, this is the largest multi-year investment in over 40 years. It is a strategic long-term investment in jobs, prosperity and growth in the economic underpinnings of our province, and it has been incredibly well received. I want to contrast that, as I said earlier, with the approach the previous government took in their very first budget, also time-allocated, to immediately slash \$400 million from post-secondary education.

Bill 197 makes operative some of the investments in elementary and secondary education, with more child care spaces and smaller class sizes. We've seen for the first time—and as the parent of two young children, I know I especially appreciate—the effect that peace and stability have had. We saw with the previous government over one million lost days of learning for our children because of labour disruption—lockouts, strikes. We have seen peace and stability in elementary and secondary school education, and our children are benefiting by it. In fact, test scores are showing that student achievement is going up.

In health, this budget makes operative lowering wait times, hiring more doctors and nurses, keeping people healthier with the creation of a new Ministry of Health Promotion.

There is one area I want to give some special attention to in the very few minutes I have available to talk. For the first time ever in the province of Ontario, a government has developed a plan for investment in infrastructure: a five-year, \$30-billion infrastructure investment plan called ReNew Ontario. It is incredibly exciting. It has been well received from one end of this province to the other. It makes operative the kinds of investments that the people of Ontario have told us are most critically important to them.

**1550**

Of those 30 billion dollars, I want to highlight some of them, and I'm so proud of the work that has gone into this, the thought, the support, from one end of government right to the other, but most importantly on behalf of the people of Ontario; for example, in the area of health care and the rebuilding of our health care.

You'd be surprised, Speaker, to know that the average age of a hospital in the province of Ontario is 43 years old. Under this plan, under this ground-breaking, \$30-billion, five-year plan, \$5 billion will be invested to modernize, to upgrade, and to ensure that Ontarians have access to state-of-the-art health care services. We have begun or completed 105 health care hospital rebuilding programs. That's unprecedented, and it is well received. I know they range from such projects as building a cancer centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie—Speaker, I know that you would want to speak to that, and perhaps the member from Barrie will speak to that. I know it ranges from the Grand River Hospital—in the member from Waterloo's riding; she may wish to speak to that very exciting project—getting the green light and having that go ahead. This news has been greeted with incredible enthusiasm from one end of the province to the other.

In education, over \$10 billion will be invested to rebuild and renew our schools, our universities and our colleges and to support the kind of training environment that we will need in order to train people for those jobs that our government is committed to supporting.

With record investments in the auto sector, with record investments in the forestry sector, and many, many others from around the province, it is important that we have the physical space, the research and development infrastructure and the lab space that will attract leading-edge researchers who will come up with the ideas which will drive our economy, and that we take the next important step and commercialize those ideas, turning them into services and products which, again, will generate significant employment.

I said health care and education. The third underpinning of our economy certainly is the ability to move around: transit, transportation and borders. We will be investing \$11.5 billion in public transportation, \$4.5 million—and I would contrast that with the approach of the previous government, who downloaded public transit on to municipalities. Not only are we building; we are seeing literally a renaissance. I understand today there was a question in the House regarding even greater interest about expanding transit options in the GTA. My colleague the Minister of Transportation is coming forward with some incredibly exciting proposals around the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and our ability to make even greater investments.

I want you to know—and, Speaker, you would know—that we are going to be connecting Barrie with the GO system as a result of some of our ground-breaking work with the federal government. We are, in fact, moving forward with the city of Toronto and the TTC's state-of-good-repair plan. We're investing in highways unlike we have ever done before: over a billion dollars this year alone invested in our highways.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Well, that's over five years, but just in one year.

But, of course, our number one investment priority is to make sure that our borders are open and that we can flow goods and people across, because, of course, Ontario is one of the most export-oriented jurisdictions in the world.

There are some other very exciting elements of ReNew Ontario, and I know that people across Ontario want to get hold of this very exciting plan: things like a \$600-million affordable housing investment, \$1 billion being invested into the justice sector.

I wish I could go on and on, but I know that my colleagues will want to speak to Bill 197. My colleague the whip here is telling me that my time, unfortunately, is up. Speaker, give me more time.

I want to thank you, and I want to urge all members of this Legislature to support not only government notice of motion 30, but also the amendment that we passed, which will allow even greater opportunity for the opposition, indeed all members of this assembly, to speak to this very

important budget bill. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me this time here today.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I am going to join the debate on this time allocation motion that has been put forward by the Liberal government. Certainly, I would contradict many of the statements that have been made by the previous speaker, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. I would remind him that we have only had three days of debate on this bill, which is the minimum allowed, and I would also remind him that despite the rhetoric we continue to hear from all members in that party about democratic renewal, consultation, openness and transparency, it is abundantly clear that this government, by its actions, demonstrates that it is totally different than what it says. In other words, you just don't get it.

In fact, we're seeing that the hypocrisy continues, because this is a government which, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty—he said on December 19, 2000, "For a government that promised to be open, this closure action is the height of arrogance, the height of exactly everything you campaigned against and you said you were for." That's what Dalton McGuinty said about time allocation, and now we see this government behaving in a way that is indeed as Mr. McGuinty said, the height of arrogance, the height of everything you campaigned against.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** Another broken promise.

**Mrs. Witmer:** As I hear my colleagues say, this time allocation motion, which you're now using for the ninth time, is again a broken promise to the people of Ontario. Now, Dalton McGuinty also said other things. He always demonstrated that he was totally opposed to this type of action, yet this government, for the ninth time, continues to close down debate—any discussion—on an issue of importance to the people of Ontario.

But let's take a look at what this minister said. I have here a quote from Hansard, from David Caplan, Don Valley East, November 21, 2001. It says, "I usually start off my remarks by saying it's a pleasure to speak to something on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, but it really isn't. This is yet another closure motion, a gag order on the Legislature." That's what this minister said. He called it a gag order. Then he went on to say, "How could it ever be a pleasure to speak to that, when that's the normal course of action and when this Legislature is shut down for the very purpose it was meant for, which was to discuss important matters?" Well, we ask the minister today, how can you impose a gag order on this Legislature to close down discussion on an issue as important as this budget bill? How can you not allow people in Ontario to have input in this significant and important piece of legislation?

But let's take a look at what some of the other colleagues across the way said, because I can tell you, many of them spoke against time allocation. In fact, let's take a

look at what the past House leader, Dwight Duncan, who is now the minister responsible for finance, said. He said on November 21, 2002, "Time allocation is used yet again by a government that has not been able to manage its meagre legislative agenda, on a substantive issue that ought to have the benefit of hearings so that experts on both sides can be called, so that members can have an informed debate on the specifics contained in the bill. That's sad. That's wrong."

I would suggest to the Liberal government that you're having some trouble managing your legislative agenda. Then on October 26, 1998, Dwight Duncan said, "Closure motions really are inherently bad for our parliamentary system and prevent members of all political parties—government members, opposition members, third party members—from fully participating in the debates of the day. They're designed to limit those discussions." Agreed. Dwight Duncan went on to say again, on April 27, 2000, "If you're truly interested in democracy, as you say you are, if that is where you're going, I suggest to you that you won't use the great mallet of closure to stifle this Legislature and to prevent public input into this bill. If you're all about democracy, you ought not to be afraid of that."

1600

Today we see that despite the utterings of the members across the way, they are demonstrating that they don't have a great deal of interest in democracy, that they don't have a great deal of interest in allowing public input into debate on this bill. In fact, they've used the time allocation motion nine times. They have limited debate on this bill to only the minimum of three days.

When the minister stood up, he bragged about this wonderful capital plan they had put in place, and all the money they were making available. Well, you take a look at the money that they're making available, you take a look at the announcements that this government is making, and many of these announcements don't happen until well after the next election, like year 2008 or 2009.

By the same token, this government has not lived up to its promise to provide almost \$80 million in funding for Cambridge hospital, a hospital that had been told that a commitment had been made, that they were going to receive funding in order that they could continue to respond to the growing needs of their community, a community, by the way, that is rapidly growing.

This government continues to break promises to the people of Ontario, and certainly the Cambridge citizens are angry. They will be coming to this Legislature to protest, and my colleague the member for Cambridge has been working hard on their behalf to force this government to live up to its promise and its commitment to the people of Cambridge in order that they can have the additional allocation and renovations that they so desperately need.

There is a need, I would say to the minister opposite, for further dialogue and further debate on this piece of legislation, because it is not warmly embraced by all the people in the province of Ontario. It means that commun-



ities like Cambridge and others will not qualify for funding.

I would also say to the member that I have an article here from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, November 17, which reminds this government that they all flocked to Kitchener in May 2004. We had David Caplan there, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, we had Transportation Minister Joe Volpe, press releases were summoning the media to the Kitchener bus terminal, and it seemed there was going to be a grand slam announcement from this government, "something along the lines of the \$600 million pledged a few days earlier for Ottawa's light rail plan, or the \$150 million for transit improvements in York region." It goes on to say, "Instead, Ministers Caplan and Volpe bunted. They promised to team up with the region to share the cost of studies associated with the light rail plan." They "pledged to put up as much as \$2.5 million."

Well, guess what? The region still doesn't have the money. This government continues to let down the people of the region of Waterloo time and time again. That's why it is important to discuss this budget bill, to make sure that people in all parts of this province, not just Liberal ridings, have access to the funding they need for transportation projects, hospital projects and other projects that are desperately needed to respond to the needs of the community, and so I oppose this motion.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** Sadly, as I too often have to say in this Legislature, I close my eyes and from the government benches I still hear Mike Harris. I still hear the same words of closure. I still hear the same words of non-compassion. I still hear the same words, "When you were in government." I don't hear anybody taking any responsibility over there for what is, after all, Liberal promise-breaking.

If you had the nerve to say what you were going to do during the election, if you had the nerve to say what you were going to do in the run-up, then for God's sake, have the nerve to continue to do it in this Legislature. Don't talk about what happened 15 years ago, 20 years ago, "when you were in government," "when George Washington was a boy," because the eyes are looking at you. It is you, after all, who have been in here for two years and a month. It is you who have the responsibility, if things were wrong, to fix them.

I listened with chagrin, I have to tell you, to the honourable member when he was talking about Bill 197 and going into a whole history of "when you were in government" or "when they were in government," knowing full well that he was on his feet—at least for the last government, because I was here for most of it—condemning every single thing that he is doing here today, condemning in articulate words what he now praises himself for doing. If this is not the Newspeak of 1984, I don't know what is.

I think the people watching on television need to know something about this bill that we have before us. I went in, and here's what the bill is: An Act to implement budget measures, by the Honourable Greg Sorbara, as he

then was, the Minister of Finance. First reading: May 11, 2005. Not one word was said in that session of the Legislature, before it was prorogued, about this bill. The Liberals could have called it. Did they call it? Not once for public debate in all of that time, from the time that it was introduced on May 11, 2005, until the House was prorogued—not once. This important bill that now must have closure: Did you call it?

In fact, on this bill, in nice, bold, red print, it reads as follows. I hope the government members look at it. Open up your binder. It says that this bill was introduced in the first session of the 38th Parliament. It has been continued as a bill of the second session by the order of the House dated June 13, 2005.

So this is what you did: You had a bill. You forced the bill through to this session because you didn't want to reintroduce it; in fact, you probably couldn't reintroduce it. Then you let it sit there when this Parliament came back. The first full day of hearings was six months after you introduced this bill. First reading was May 11.

The first full day of hearings was October 25, 2005. On October 25, 2005, there were a couple of speakers, of course. Mr. Duncan and Mr. Arthurs split the government time but chose not to use all of it. You had an hour, but I think you used something like 30 minutes of government time debating that bill. Then the next speaker, of course, was member Runciman from Leeds–Grenville. He used most of his time. He was allocated about an hour and used most of his time, so chalk one up for the Conservatives speaking about the bill. Then, of course, I had my opportunity to speak to the bill, and I spoke for some 52 minutes that day. The time ran out because it turned to 6 o'clock. I spoke for my 52 minutes and I came back the next day.

The next day, there were a couple of speakers who stood up to talk about the bill again. I finished my eight minutes. We had Liberals again splitting 20 minutes. Two speakers stood up only to speak approximately 10 minutes each, members Ramal and Delaney. Then the member from Erie–Lincoln stood up to make his speech. He spoke for the period of time allocated to him.

We came back for a third day of hearings. Not one Liberal wanted to talk about this bill. The rotation went around and around and around, and not one Liberal used time to speak about this bill—not one. The people who spoke on that day were the member from Renfrew–Nepean—Mr. Yakabuski. I'm sorry, I can't think of it. The member from Nickel Belt spoke, the member from Whitby–Ajax spoke, the member from Niagara Centre spoke and the member from Simcoe North spoke. Not one Liberal thought it worthy to get out of his or her seat and actually say something about this bill, and then today they invoke closure.

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They don't even want to talk about it. They can't even say why it's a good bill. They can't even say why it's necessary. They can't tell a single soul in this Legislature, or people watching it, why they didn't call the bill from May of last year, why they have allowed two days

of debate in which they chose largely not to speak to the bill at all. And now it is so important that it has to be finalized, no one else can say anything about it.

Should closure ever be invoked? I've never been on the government side. I've never been over there. I have to tell you that I can think of a few circumstances where you may have to do it. This quite clearly, though, is not one of them. Has debate been exhausted? You haven't even spoken. You haven't said a word. You haven't even stood out of your seat.

People who want to speak to this bill are not going to get an opportunity. I can speak today because you're invoking closure, so I can talk again, but those who actually want to talk to the bill are not going to have that opportunity. They are not going to have an opportunity to tell you what a bad bill this is. They're not going to have an opportunity to tell you how this budget has grossly failed the people of Ontario. They're not going to have an opportunity to hold you to account for the election promises you've made and that you will never, ever keep. They're not going to be able to hold you to account for what the people of Ontario expect them to hold you to account for.

This is an awful budget. This is an awful budget, unless you're well-to-do. It's an awful budget, unless you don't really expect very much from your government. If you don't expect very much, then it's probably an OK budget, because you're not getting very much.

When I used to be in municipal politics, there were many types of people. There were people who thought that the government's role in the municipality was to pick up the garbage, and if the garbage was picked up, the municipality was OK. That's all they cared about. There were people, though, and an awful lot of them thankfully in East York, who cared a lot more than that. They cared about the boards and committees. They cared about what government was doing, how their money was being spent, whether the library was in good shape, whether the police were well funded. They cared about a whole range of things.

Well, I will tell you, people in Ontario are no different than the people of East York. They're exactly the same. They care about a whole range of things. They don't just care whether taxes are raised or not raised. They don't just care about whether the deficit is this big or this big or whether there's an effort being made, although it is a factor. I will not deny for a second it is a factor. But they care about things that you have not addressed and will never address in this budget.

I think back to the days when the Liberals were on this side of the House. I think back to the days when the Liberals actually stood for social reform. I remember many of the members, some of whom are here in this room today, were very eloquent when it came to the poor. They were very eloquent when it came to people on welfare, children and single mothers who had to subsist on \$500, \$600 or \$700 a month in a city like Toronto or cities like Hamilton, Mississauga or Ottawa. They would ask passionately and with great debate what the government was going to do to assist those poor.

I see those same members on the government bench today and those same people who are trying to close down debate, not wanting those very things to be asked. Where are they today, speaking about this? Where are they standing up and saying that not one cent in this budget is going to the poor, not one cent in this budget is going to the people who most desperately need it? In fact, as I said in my debate, and I will say here again, those poorest of the poor people on ODSP and welfare, those who rely on government assistance, are actually worse off today under this budget than they were in the worst days of the Harris government. Because of inflation and because of the fact that you have only raised their payments 3% in the first budget and nothing in this, they are actually worse off today than when Mike Harris walked out that door for the last time.

You know, I used to expect better things from Liberals. Perhaps I was naive sitting on this side of the House and watching them ask those very questions and promising to be, oh, so different once they were in government. I have to tell you that you are no different in government. You were different in opposition, but you are exactly the same in government as the people you used to attack. You say the same things; you act the same way. The only difference now is that you turn to the poor and say, "I am so sorry I can't give you an increase," instead of, "There's no increase for you." You say, "I'm so sorry. If only we had the money, if only times were better, if only we hadn't been left such a deficit, we would actually care for you."

I think about those who are on ODSP, those people who cannot work, those people who are infirm and sick, confirmed by doctors and verified by municipalities and by the province, who got no money at all this year from a government that I can only say should have had a heart and was, in fact, heartless.

I look back to what they promised about rent supplements. They promised to have a whole system of rent supplements. I see what is happening here: the slowness for those who are actually going to get one and the impossibility for the thousands and tens of thousands of people who thought they were going to be eligible.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** 5,000.

**Mr. Prue:** The member beside me, the honourable PA to the minister, is yelling "5,000." That is but a drop in the bucket. What did you promise? How many of these rent supplements did you promise? Some 20,000 is what I remember—30,000, 50,000? In fact, you have a tiny little pittance that most people cannot and will never be able to qualify for. Those 5,000 are a drop in the bucket. You are doing nothing. You are pitiful in what you do. You can protest what you want. I know, when I heard you on this side of the House, that you would never have accepted 5,000 as a number. You would have guffawed if the government had suggested 5,000 was right. You would have known in your heart that it is pitiful. I tell you to your face that what you have done is pitiful. And now you close down debate so other honourable members can't enter it, so they can't talk about the really bad job you are doing.



I look at the aboriginal communities and how they have suffered with the patience of Job, all of them, since Confederation. The people in Treaty 9 in northern Ontario: Many of us have had an opportunity to go up into their communities and talk to them. You see, among the treaties in Canada, the 12 that have been signed, Treaty 9 was signed not only by the government of Canada but also by the government of Ontario. People forget that. Treaty 9 was signed by the government of Ontario to ensure that the aboriginal communities in northern Ontario would not be left out of the largesse, would not be left out of the prosperity of this Ontario, of this province, with all its wealth and all its riches. And you know, the people who signed Treaty 9, particularly the aboriginal community, believed they were not going to be left out.

Did this budget leave them out? This budget was a disgrace in how it dealt with aboriginal communities. Was there money for the ministry that looks after them? No. It was cut by 20%. This is the budget you're here defending, the same budget—the same Kashechewan where they can't drink the water. It just numbs my mind: In every single community, if you have gone to see them, there are no roads, there is inadequate sewage, there is poor drinking water—they have to boil it in most communities—the schools in at least one or two have had to be shut down because the oil has leaked and they're unsafe. Most of the homes the people live in have mould.

Is there money in this budget for Treaty 9? Is there anything in this budget that you have done for the aboriginal community about which you can say, "I am proud. We are making progress"? There is absolutely nothing. What this budget has done to the aboriginal communities, the First Nations of Ontario, is a disgrace. This is the party that cannot defend it, because it is the party that will not put anyone up to speak to this issue or any other issue. It is the party, instead, that invokes closure so that no one else can talk about your failures.

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I look at the failures around autism. I remember what Dalton McGuinty wrote. When I was knocking on the door, I remember what my constituents said at the door, how they were going to vote Liberal. I remember one very proud family, the Quance family—I've talked about them many times in the Legislature—who thought that finally there was an opportunity for their daughter, who has autism. This is a wonderful family, a remarkable family. They have done everything in their power to get IBI treatment for their daughter, who is now five and closing in on six. They have mortgaged their house. They have remortgaged their house. They have borrowed money from friends and family. The community has held fundraiser after fundraiser. Both of the parents have two jobs each. Do you know something? I would like a Liberal to stand up and tell this Legislature how this budget helps the Quance family. I'd like a Liberal to stand up in this House and say what a good job you are doing to help the most disadvantaged children of this province: those who are born with autism, those who will never be able

to be self-sufficient unless help is given early and often. The Quances believed in you then. I have to tell you, the last time I went to a fundraiser, speaker after speaker who stood up to talk about the plight of the family had nothing kind whatsoever to say about this government or the people who represent this government in this Legislature. Person after person stood up and said how they had supported you in the last election because you had promised, you had given a commitment, that you would deal with children with autism beyond the age of six.

What have you done instead? You have taken these same families, who are fighting with all of the courage, all of the resources they have, through the courts. You have taken them to court after court after court. That is what you have done and that is what you have used this budget to do. You have not used the budget to help the very people you had promised; you have used it to hurt them.

I look at other things you have done. I look at the failure of agricultural policy in this province, and I am not a farmer; I'm from Toronto. I only really know, about agriculture, what the farmers tell me. They have come to this Legislature many times.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** Farmers Feed Cities.

**Mr. Prue:** As was said, and rightly so, the farmers feed cities. I know where my food comes from. I don't grow it; they grow it. I eat it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Prue:** Yes. I grow cherry tomatoes. That's what I grow in my garden, but everything else, other than that, I get from a farmer. That's the reality. I get it from a farmer, in terms of food.

I want to tell you that I have great, great pride in what they do and what they do in Ontario. I know the difficult problems they have. I know about world subsidies. I know how some countries subsidize and some don't. I know about tariffs with the United States. I know all of those things. But the nitty-gritty, what it comes down to: Farmers tell me today that they are not as well off as they were before, that it is more and more difficult and that they don't see this government helping. When I looked at the budget, I saw that there was a decline in monies to agriculture in this budget. I would like a Liberal to stand up—because none of you have, so far—and talk about what you have done to help the farmers of this province.

I would like you to stand up and talk too about the environment. I would like you to stand up and defend the big pipe that's running north of the city. I would like you to stand up and say why the Ladies of the Lake on Lake Simcoe have to put out a calendar to try to stop the degradation of probably the largest cottage lake in all of Ontario, where more people have homes and recreational homes than any other place. The people there used to look to the government and now they're having to sell calendars instead to look after that.

I'd like you to explain why your budget was so silent in help for municipalities. I'd like to know why a municipality like Toronto this year is going to turn around and

again have to ask for \$300 million so as not to raise taxes. You promised to deal with that.

Every week I look in the paper, joyously hoping that maybe, hope against hope, there's going to be some announcement, some breakthrough. A couple of days ago, I saw in the paper a 12-page memorandum of understanding that contained almost nothing: no budget measures, no opportunities for the cities to raise funds, no extra real power, except when it comes to speed humps—absolutely nothing.

We have closure here today. We have a government that introduced a bill and then would not call it for debate. They let the whole time between May and the last session in June completely elapse with no debate. Then they had the whole period of time in September completely elapse without calling this bill. Then they called it on October 25, for one day of hearings. They split their time in half. They speak to half the limited time that they have, split between two people. They called it back on October 31 and they did the same: They split 20 minutes between two people, and then they refused thereafter to allow anyone else to speak. Quite frankly, I think they are embarrassed to speak about their lack of action on so many fronts.

I cannot support this closure. I don't care whether the NDP invoked closure five times and the Conservatives 500 times, although I was here for most of those. It was frustrating; I was frustrated with them. They would not allow ordinary public debate. You, on the other hand, although you've allowed it on so many occasions, are stifling it here because you don't want to speak to your own bill. You don't have the temerity. You will not stand up and defend the indefensible. So instead you let us rant and rave, I guess—today—you invoke closure at the end of it and then you say that that's the end of it. We go back for third reading, you take some more licks and then you're out of here.

That's what this is all about: You cannot take the sustained pressure on your failures. This is a failure of a bill, and the invoking of closure is the greatest failure of all.

**Mr. Duguid:** I'm pleased to rise today to—

**Mr. Prue:** He speaks.

**Mr. Duguid:** I do speak. Indeed, I speak in here almost every day. I'm proud to be here to speak, as well.

I listened carefully to the comments made by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, and of course the comments made by the member from Beaches–East York.

I've got to tell you, I don't know if you caught in the comments of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that she accused the government of being hypocritical, which I always thought was a sort of unparliamentary word. I suggest that she really ought to look in the mirror when it comes to that word, which I still consider to be unparliamentary, and I don't want to accuse her of it. When you look at the record of their government compared to our government—look at the number of bills we've introduced: 71 bills that have been introduced in this House;

53 passed. This is only the ninth time that we've had to use time allocation. We didn't use it because we wanted to; we used it because we have to get this legislation through because it's in the public interest to make sure we do. We did it because we were forced to use it.

On the other hand, look at the previous government, from 1999–2003: 110 bills; 67 motions for time allocation. Compare that: 67 motions for 110 bills compared to 71 government bills and only using time allocation nine times. You just can't compare. I suggest that when the member uses words like “hypocrisy,” for goodness' sake, she'd better be looking in the mirror, because it certainly doesn't apply to this side of the House. It applies to the party that made those particular accusations.

This isn't something we're doing because we like to do this; this is something we're doing because it's time to move on with this bill. It's been here for a very long period of time and has had many, many hours of debate. We need to move on with this bill for a number of reasons. Look at what is in this bill. Look at the fact of the \$6.2 billion that's being invested in post-secondary education. That's something that people of this province want us to get on with. In fact, we're doing the best we can to get on with it, but we've got to pass this legislation to move forward. It's important that we get on with that investment. It's an important investment in our colleges and universities—in fact, the biggest investment we've seen in at least 40 years in this province, an investment in the college and university sector to ensure that those buildings can be brought up to a world standard, a standard that at one time this country and this province could be proud of. But it has been allowed to deteriorate over time, to the point where, in this province, we fund—I think we are ninth out of 10, or were ninth out of 10, in funding for post-secondary education across this country. That's just not acceptable.

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We need to invest more in our post-secondary education. That's what this budget does: It invests in our post-secondary education system, it invests in our colleges and universities, but more importantly, it invests in our young people, because it ensures that those post-secondary institutions are accessible to those young people. That's important for them to go on and achieve things in their life, to go on and become the best that they can be in our society, but it's important to each and every Ontarian as well, because if we want to achieve the prosperity in this province that I think all of us on all sides of the House would like to see us achieve, we're going to have to have the most skilled and trained workforce in the world. To do that, those young people have to get access to post-secondary education, if we want to have that kind of workforce. If we want to have the most skilled workforce in the world, they need the best education that they can get in the world. That's what we're trying to provide by giving them access to post-secondary education.

We're enhancing the loans program, which is very important. But for the first time in many, many years—I



believe, probably over a decade—we're also providing grants to some of these young people, and that's important too, because when you look at some of these young people after they graduate, when you look at that debt load they have to acquire, it is sometimes astronomical. Some of these young people go on and attain wonderful jobs with great incomes fairly early, but most of them have to work their way up, even after they get their post-secondary education degree. I think of my brother. He has been a lawyer now for probably six or seven years, and he's still paying off his student loan. He's making three times the amount of money I'm making, but he's still paying off that student loan. He's not one of the ones I feel sorry for, because he's making good money. But some of the people who graduate have a pretty sizable student debt, and they don't have the bucks to be able to pay for that. So it is important that we provide grants to some of these young people to help them get through and help them gain access to post-secondary education so they can become the best they can be, so that we as a province can obtain the prosperity that we want to obtain.

It starts even before then. Our school system in this province was in dire need of investment when this government came to office. Through this budget, we're investing in our schools.

I look back at my riding. I was in Churchill Collegiate not too long ago. They took me—

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** Good school.

**Mr. Duguid:** It is a good school. You went to that school, didn't you? I think the member for Scarborough Southwest is a graduate of Churchill, if I recall.

**Mr. Prue:** He went there for at least 10 years.

**Mr. Duguid:** At least 10 years; no, I think he graduated in six or seven. But he graduated from Churchill and did well—probably with honours, if I know him. It may have taken him a little longer, but he graduated with honours.

But when he was going to Churchill I'm sure it was in much better shape than it was for the last number of graduating classes. Their boiler system had almost broken down. In fact, there were concerns about safety with regard to the boiler system in that school. It was at least a \$1-million investment that had to be made in that one school alone under the previous government. Unfortunately, those investments were not being made. What's important is that we make sure these dollars do flow so that we can invest in our schools to ensure that things—maybe a boiler system is not all that sexy, but can you imagine trying to operate a school without a properly operating boiler system? The students in that school are now going to have better regulated temperatures in the school. They will now be in a safer environment, not to mention a number of other investments that have been made in that school and many other schools around the province that ensure that what we inherited as a government, which many considered to be Third World conditions for our schools—I don't know if that was

necessarily the case throughout the system, but certainly there are some glaring examples of that. At least now investments can be made in those schools to ensure that they are suitable for our young people to be able to get good educations. That's what this bill is about: making sure that we can make those important investments that were included in our budget.

We look at the classrooms themselves and the number of students in some of these classrooms, and we look at the need to try to reduce the size of our classrooms, and we do that for a number of reasons. Number one, we believe and we know that teachers need to be there to pay attention to the students and give them the attention they need and deserve, but we also do it because there is a need to intervene sometimes in the lives of these young people.

When we see some of the problems going on in and around the greater Toronto area, the shootings we see, the youth crime and violence, one of the most opportune times—in fact, it's late in the continuum of intervention, but it's still one of the most opportune times to intervene when these young people are in school, especially in the early grades. In the early grades, you can spot some young person who may be showing anti-social behaviour, and if you intervene then, you can rest assured that down the road you're not going to have to bring the justice system into play. You're not going to have to pay for thousands more police officers, which is another thing this budget is going to help us pay for. You're not going to have to intervene at that serious level. You can intervene early, and you can only do that if you identify the problem in the young people who are having those problems.

It's incredibly important that we move forward with what is a budget that's been seen right across the province as a good budget, a budget that delivers better education, better health care, better prosperity for the people of Ontario. It's a budget that it's time we move on with, so we can get on with the chore of delivering these very important programs.

**Ms. Scott:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak this afternoon. Unfortunately, it's invoking closure on the Ontario budget, which affects all our lives, and nothing is more important than the budget for the people of Ontario.

The Liberals had choices and options, and they certainly picked the wrong ones. I wonder why they have invoked closure nine times now, I think the member from Waterloo said. When the Liberals were in opposition, they had some interesting comments about closure.

Jim Bradley, the current House leader, said, "What you have with this time allocation motion, with this closure motion, is a government that, every day it comes into the House, gets worse in the way it deals with the democratic process." Yet here is the Liberal government invoking closure today on one of the most important things to the people of Ontario, the budget, on how they are spending their money. "Time and again, the government puts the boots to the opposition in this Legis-



lature, as it has this afternoon with this time allocation motion—more ominous, more sinister every time.” Again, the member from St. Catharines, on December 15, 1997, said that.

The minister from Windsor West: “I am not pleased to be speaking to another closure motion today.... The government doesn’t want to hear how it has failed, and I will continue to point this out to the government always in the hope that they will finally take the suggestions we have made and apply them to the people.” That’s from December 1999. I guess she’s done an about-face.

We’ve been trying to make suggestions on the budget. They haven’t called it many times, and now they are invoking closure without people having the opportunity to speak.

The minister from Kingston and the Islands: “Of course the first thing that ought to be said is that this is once again a closure motion, another closure motion where the government is basically saying, ‘We don’t want any further debate. We do not want this bill to go to committee. We do not want to have any debate on third reading. We’re shutting her down.’”

That’s exactly what they’re doing here, not giving everyone the opportunity to speak to the budget and how it affects the people of Ontario. We’re now at the McGuinty Liberals’ fourth fiscal plan in two years. It completely missed an opportunity to do what’s right and help the people of Ontario.

You were good to the government this past year, the people of Ontario, bringing in far more revenues than expected, \$2.658 billion extra, unbudgeted dollars to be exact. Did the government seek in any way to return the favour and acknowledge the hard work by which the people of Ontario produced the revenue? No.

You over-performed, something the budget made clear. You deserve some recognition. Instead, you got saddled with even more debt, and you will pay even more tax this year, twice as many dollars in health care tax in 2005 as in 2004.

You, through your hard-earned income taxes, the people of Ontario, gave the McGuinty government \$274 million more in income taxes alone, above and beyond what was expected. But did the Dalton McGuinty government give some of that tax money back to you? Not one dime.

The illegal health tax that they brought in, which they promised they would not do, did they give any of that back? No. In fact, this year you’re paying double what you paid last year for the health tax. I bet, if you ask the people of Ontario—I ask the people of my riding of Haliburton—Victoria—Brock all the time—they’re paying more and getting less in health care.

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On top of this, the new pile of income tax dollars, the government received an additional \$1.2 billion in bailouts from the federal government, not including the most recent bailout they received just a few days before the budget. Even more money poured in unexpectedly: an additional \$1.193 billion in corporate tax dollars col-

lected from over-performing job creators across the province. In total, this past year alone, the McGuinty Liberals received \$2.658 billion more than they expected.

They had some choices to make. They had various options they could have pursued, alone or together. A tidal wave of \$2.658 billion in unbudgeted, unexpected cash could have, and should have, produced a deficit lower than planned. Instead it’s miraculously up by \$800 million. Can you imagine winning a \$2.6-billion lottery and somehow winding up owing an extra \$800 million? That’s exactly what Dalton McGuinty did this year. It shows that he has no plan—not a big surprise. Let’s be honest. If he can’t find a way not to get deeper and deeper into the hole when he has an unexpected \$2.6-billion windfall of tax dollars, then he certainly can’t be trusted to manage Ontario’s economy when things get tough, or even when things go exactly as planned.

That’s an important point. If things had gone exactly as Dalton McGuinty had planned this year, if revenue had been exactly what he projected, Ontario’s deficit would have been increased by a devastating \$2.6 billion. Why is that? Because he spent, he spent, and he spent some more.

They can’t even manage their own expenses. The reason we have brought budgets in is so we can bring discipline to our finances to ensure that we can make ends meet. If any of us received an unexpected windfall we would probably pay down a credit card or some other debt before we went on a brand new spending spree. If you are an employer and one of your workers over-performed and brought in billions more than expected, you might give that worker a bonus or at least a thank you. But Dalton McGuinty had the choice to either pay down the debt or give something back to you, the people who earned the money. He chose neither. Instead, he spent all of the extra money you gave to him and then some, actually adding to the deficit our children will inherit.

It gets worse. The closer you look at the Liberals’ ad lib budget, the worse it gets. Let’s look at what they promised and what they’ve done.

Balance the budget every year: What they actually did—plan to run a deficit at least five years in a row now. They will add \$13.8 billion to the deficit in that time.

Repeal the Balanced Budget Act: “I won’t raise your taxes”—the most famous.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** He did, though.

**Ms. Scott:** He did: the new \$2.4-billion health tax; a 12% increase to corporate income tax—overall, the largest tax hike in the history of Ontario.

No accounting trickery in the province’s books: What did really happen? He got caught by the auditor not properly accounting for \$4 billion in hydro liabilities, using billions in revenue from past years to reduce their deficit, including tax receipts from as far back as 1995.

How about that famous “cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour”? Instead, they raised the rate to 5.5 cents for most hydro ratepayers. Another increase is expected in the spring of 2006. They’re getting deeper into your pockets.



Will not add to the debt: Well, the current Liberal plan will see the debt rise by almost \$20 billion by 2008-09. The McGuinty Liberals will add over \$1,000 in debt for every man, woman and child in Ontario. The debt is rising at more than \$75 per second under the McGuinty Liberals.

It goes on and on, what they've done.

What does that really mean to the average Ontario family—two income earners making a total of \$61,000? Let's use that as an example. They are now paying over \$2,000 more per year in additional taxes and costs than they were paying when the McGuinty Liberals were elected. The health tax takes \$690 out of their pockets every year. Electricity costs have increased for the average home by \$180 per year, with prices set to increase again next year, as I said. Natural gas costs are increasing by \$65 for the average house this year. Gasoline costs are increasing by over \$600 for the average family this year. Driver's licences cost \$25 more to renew for each driver. Annual eye exams now cost at least \$75 for each adult. Cancelling the 2004 income tax cuts results in \$240 in lost spending money every year for the average family.

So the Ontario debt continues to swell under the McGuinty Liberals. By the next election the share of that debt for every man, woman and child will have increased by \$1,113, approximately 10%. Tell me Ontarians are better off. I can hardly see it.

Let's take a look into health care. Wait times are getting longer. People can't find family doctors. I mentioned this afternoon in a question to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that I have approximately 30,000 orphaned patients in my riding. Family health teams are great. We support their purpose. It doesn't mean that more people are going to access care. Services are being delisted. There's a crisis; the Ontario Hospital Association is not getting the money they need to run the hospitals. They failed to mention the wait times. They have no way of proving what the wait times are now, so how are they going to gauge that? They mentioned that they provided funding for over 3,000 more nurse positions but failed to mention that they just laid off over 800 nurses and another 1,200 health care workers. The full-time nurses' jobs that they say they've created are three-month and six-month contracts. They failed to mention the carryover, the \$330-million hospital deficit crisis that they still have not addressed. The budget failed to mention the inflationary costs facing hospitals to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. That's about a \$1-billion gap they failed to mention in their budget. They failed to mention what the president of the Ontario Hospital Association brought to the public's attention: This means that many hospitals could, within weeks, be required to lay off staff and close beds.

Agriculture: What was in the budget about agriculture? Neglect, the cold shoulder—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** Increased.

**Ms. Scott:** Actually, it's not increased. The member for Northumberland thinks it's increased. They've actually reduced agriculture funding by over \$600 million in

this budget. They weren't satisfied with—what was that?—the 20% cut in the budget last year to agriculture. This government doesn't understand farmers.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Scott:** The member from Beaches–East York: Farmers Feed Cities. The grain and oilseed producers were here this week saying to us, "We can't survive. Farmers are leaving. We cannot continue to farm in this province of Ontario." Your government is failing to address this.

Thank you very much for the comments.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I have to say that it's a great opportunity for me to raise a couple of issues of concern that I have with not only the proceedings this evening but the budget bill itself. I want to start off, as most others have, just to put on the record my disappointment with the government's decision to invoke closure on this bill. People have mentioned it already but it's worth saying again: What that in effect does is close down the debate on the bill. It closes down the discussion. It reduces the opportunities for members of the Legislature to rise and discuss the issues or concerns that they have with this budget.

It's interesting, because I'm sure people at home are thinking, "Budget? What do you mean, 'budget'? It's November. Why are they talking about a budget?" They're talking about a budget because, even though the budget was introduced way back—I think it was in May or something like that—it hasn't been called for debate. So here we are at the end of November—OK, so we're at the middle of November; we're past the middle of November—and the government has decided that they weren't going to bother to have us debate the budget bill all through the months that we've sat up until this point.

Here we have an opportunity to finally debate the budget bill and, lo and behold, the government decides that they really don't want to hear too much about what the rest of us have to say about their failure in this bill. It's not unexpected, and I don't think it is a surprise that that's the case. But, lo and behold, that is the unfortunate situation; that is the unfortunate case. For a government that talks about transparency, and has a lot of language around how they're going to be so open and democratic, unfortunately some of their actions don't reflect the remarks in that regard. That's a very frustrating thing for people who think to themselves, "Well, they stand for this, this, and that." They thought that the Liberals stood for a whole bunch of things when they were running in the election back in 2003, and lo and behold, a little over two years later we found that in fact they don't stand for a heck of a lot of anything. Not only have they broken many promises but they've turned around and implemented things that nobody had any idea they were going to do. I think particularly of the famous, or is it infamous, health tax that they've foisted on the people of Ontario.

Nonetheless, there are some specific issues that I am very, very concerned about that I fear are not even on this government's radar. It just floors me that things are happening across this province that this government simply



is not able to get a handle on. Never mind as a member of the provincial Legislature, but as a person in Ontario, as a person in southern Ontario, as a person in industrial southern Ontario, I can tell you that I'm very, very concerned.

1650

I want to start off by talking about how people in my community are faring under the McGuinty Liberal regime, under the McGuinty Liberal plan, or lack thereof, that's unfolding in the province of Ontario. They are not faring well; in fact, they are faring poorly. Many would say that they are faring worse than they fared under the previous government, and that's a frightening thought, because people foisted out the previous government because they were tired of losing ground, because they were tired of moving backwards, because they had been sold a bill of goods that we were going to start moving forward in this province. Unfortunately, that's just not happening.

So when I say this, I don't say it lightly. I don't say it lightly because very many people are extremely disappointed. Frankly, I would count myself amongst those people. Why do I say that? Because if you look at what's happening in communities and you look at what's happening to regular families and regular people, you'll see that they are having reductions in their quality of life. By bits and pieces, this government is tearing away at the very fabric of these communities and these families. I can tell you how they're doing that. They're doing that by not having policies that are going to ensure that people can affordably be able to heat and light their homes, for example. So we have people who are struggling under the cost of increasing hydro rates, increasing gas rates, increasing insurance rates and increasing property tax rates. For those families who are in a position to be able to even think of sending their children to post-secondary education, that's another looming increase that's on the horizon, which is the increased cost of post-secondary education.

I received an e-mail recently. Do you know what? It so appropriately outlined the way this government is perceived by regular people in the community that I thought it would be really important to bring it to this debate and read it into the record, because I fear that the members of this government are not hearing what people are telling them. If they were, they wouldn't be so arrogantly ignoring what I'm saying and laughing beside me while I'm trying to enlighten them as to what the opinions are of some of the community members I'm talking to.

Let me read this e-mail that I received from John Hand, who lives in the city of Hamilton. It's to Dalton McGuinty. It says:

"Dalton McGuinty: I have voted Liberal all my life but now I can't wait until the next election. I work for a hospital and let me tell you that all the people are scared that they are going to lose their jobs. Contracting out our jobs and building P3 hospitals are things you said you would not do. And with CEOs making \$560,000 a year

and the doctors wanting private clinics so they can make more money is a crime this is not the fix for our health care. You say we have a shortage of doctors, well if they are all in private clinics who will be working in our hospitals? This is just a scam for them...." I can't actually read this one part, Mr. Speaker, because it's inappropriate, but nonetheless, I'll go on to the next sentence. It's not inappropriate in terms of sentiment, but it's unparliamentary language, and I don't want you to get mad at me, so I'm going to skip that sentence. "You have lost my vote, I will never vote Liberal again,"—and that's in bold—"and you should look at this because my wife and me are only one family who are going to lose their jobs in health care in Ontario. There are thousands of us and I am sure you have lost their votes too. In case you have not noticed"—to my point—"there aren't many jobs in Hamilton that pay more than minimum wage. With the cost of living, the middle-class people of Ontario are now becoming the poor. Thanks for nothing."

And then there is a list:

"P3 hospitals and contracting out = lost jobs

"Gas prices = paying more to drive and to heat our homes

"Hydro prices = paying more yet again

"Insurance = paying more for house and car

"Rents for apartments = just take a look it's like paying a mortgage

"College and universities = pay more to get in, cap being removed

"And the list goes on."

There are a couple of sentences in closure that I can't repeat, but one I can:

"Dalton you are not good for Ontario or Canadians

"The only thing that you have done is hurt the people of Ontario."

This came to me just two days ago, and when I read it, I thought—I was pretty sure I had House duty tonight. I wasn't sure what we would be debating, but when I found out that we were debating this, I immediately went back and pulled that e-mail off because I think it clearly states what many people are feeling about the failure of their government to address the real needs of real families and real people in Ontario. This is a classic reflection of what people are telling me. I don't know what the Liberal members heard during constituency week, but I can tell you what I heard. I heard a lot more people talking about these very issues and these very concerns. People are struggling.

It's interesting, because not only does Mr. John Hand from Hamilton very nicely lay out his disappointment and what he considers to be the failures of the government to address the concerns that he has as a person living in Ontario, but he also refers to the issue of job losses in the city of Hamilton. I've raised this issue several times in the House. I actually pulled off an article that was published in our Hamilton Spectator recently, because I think the headline itself is one that's instructive: "Economic Pressures Threaten Factories." It's a whole article that talks about, in large part, the hydro



policy of this government and how it's causing the manufacturing sector to close many plants in the southern Ontario industrial manufacturing sector. But it also indicates that there is a survey that had been done. It says that of the 942 companies surveyed, only 32% reported an improvement in business this year, and even fewer said they expect things to get better in 2006. More than half, 56%, said that rising business costs are their greatest challenge. Another 41% cited specifically the rising cost of energy. It's interesting, because one of the things that wasn't mentioned in Mr. Hand's e-mail is reflected somewhat in this article in the *Spectator*, and that's the rising business costs.

I had an opportunity to sit in Hamilton with our Hamilton-area BIA group—HABIA, they're called—a collective group of the business improvement area representatives for the city of Hamilton. They're from the downtown core but from all of the suburban parts of the municipality as well. What did they tell me? Holy smokes, they told me the same thing. They're concerned about energy prices, they're concerned about gas prices, they're concerned about property taxes, and they're concerned that this government hasn't listened to the needs and concerns of small business on many, many fronts. Equalization of the business education tax, for example, was a big one. There were a number of other issues around the property tax system and what that's doing for small business. That's something that I think this government has failed to address and, unfortunately, it looks like they're going to continue to fail to address.

However, I want to get back to the factory issue. Every time I talk about job loss, I hear Liberals stand up and say "No, we're creating jobs. The economy is doing great." Well, you know what? Look at the kinds of jobs that are being created, compared to the kinds of jobs we're losing. We're losing the high-paid manufacturing jobs that have benefits, that have health care benefits, that have pensions. We're losing the kinds of jobs that sustain families in communities. We're losing the kinds of jobs that allow people to contribute in larger ways to local economies. That's what we're losing. And what are we getting in return? We're getting service sector jobs that are low-paid; in fact, that are often so low-paid that parents have to work two or three jobs just to be able to pay the rent and put food on the table. Then people wonder why we have a crisis with our children. Well, holy smokes, if their parents are out working three jobs, how the heck are they going to be making sure that their kids are doing OK?

I'll say a little bit more about that if I have some time, but the point I'm trying to make is this: It's not adequate, it's not appropriate, it's not good to allow the loss of high-paying, decent jobs in our economy and replace them with low-paid jobs that have no benefits, that require people to work two or three of those jobs just to be able to make ends meet.

I would be remiss if I didn't refer to the crisis that a number of members of our caucus raise on a very regular basis, and that's the crisis in forestry. One of the heads of

industry in Hamilton described to me what's happening in big industry generally. He described it as a train wreck. He said, "At the front of the train wreck is the forestry industry. But, lo and behold, watch what is happening, because every car behind that train is heading right into that same train wreck." Of course, the train wreck he's talking about is the hydro policy of this government. Look at what is happening in the forestry industry and you will see that the pressure is unsustainable; it's untenable.

#### 1700

We've got mines closing. We've got forestry manufacturers closing. We've got pulp and paper mills closing. We've got jobs being lost in small communities. And guess what? It's not like there are a lot of other jobs in some of those small communities where those small mills are, so that people can just find another job; it's just not going to happen. Even the service sectors you might be able to find in some of the larger southern Ontario communities are not available either, so you're actually threatened with the loss of whole communities in the north.

I talk about that because I think it's an extremely important piece that this government has missed the boat on. We all know that forestry is the second-largest industry in the entire province, and we see the threat to mills in places like Kapuskasing, Red Rock, Kenora and community after community. In fact, we had the leaders of those communities, along with the leaders of industries and the leaders of unions in those communities come and speak to us a few short weeks ago. They are worried. They are extremely concerned.

Do you know what? The effect of the loss of forestry jobs, the effect of the decline in pulp and paper mills is not only going to affect the north—I think "affect" is a very mild word. It's not only going to devastate the north, but it's going to have an impact on southern Ontario as well: a \$250-million impact, because those very mills, those very industries in the north rely on services and secondary industries that are located in the south to supply them in their production in the north. So we'll lose another \$250 million of economic activity in southern Ontario if something isn't done, and done quickly, by this government. Of course, this is not a new issue. This issue has been brewing for a very long time, and the Liberals simply have done nothing about it. It certainly hasn't been addressed in any major way in their budget—the bill we're discussing this very evening.

There are a couple of things I thought I should mention, and I want to do that at this point. The government has also missed the chance, or ignored the opportunity through this budget, to deal with the poverty that is growing day by day in the province of Ontario. It's interesting, because they talk around, "We're going to do this for children and we're going to do this for health care and we're going to do this for education," but guess what? Poor kids are not going to succeed in school. Poor kids are not going to be healthy. And guess what? Kids are going to be poor if their parents are poor. So shame



on you for spinning out all this stuff that purports to address things like education for children and health care for children when you won't deal with the basic, most fundamental root issue that faces children who are not able to succeed in Ontario, and that is the poverty of themselves and their parents.

Did the government address that? No. Did they change ODSP and Ontario Works rates? No. Did they stop the clawback of the national child benefit, money that would go immediately into the pockets of the parents of children living in poverty? No. They had an opportunity to do that, and instead they decided not to. So they're making all these announcements and doing all these other things, but they're not acknowledging, and are refusing to act on, one of the most significant, most important pieces of social policy, and that is the fact that children are growing up in extremely poor households.

You'd think, "OK. If they're not going to deal with the income side, maybe they'll deal with the biggest expense people have, which actually contributes to the poverty of many families, and that is the cost of housing." Everybody knows that the cost of housing is usually the largest portion of anyone's budget. I would say that virtually all people who are living in poverty are paying at least 50%—oftentimes closer to 75%—of their income on shelter.

What is this government's response? They're not putting any money into affordable housing. They're taking federal money and transferring it over, but I'm hearing from my municipality that still not much is happening in terms of on-the-ground affordable housing units being built. Nonetheless, they're not actually investing any of their own money in affordable housing. They're taking federal money, perhaps moving it over, but not making any commitments themselves.

They're not addressing the Tenant Protection Act, which speaks to the ability of people to maintain their rental households, let alone vacancy decontrol and all the other things they complained about or criticized—the previous government's initiatives in that regard—along with us, because we think they're wrong. But they haven't done anything to address those either.

Another thing the government is claiming some success on but not investing any money in—again, we are talking about the budget bill; they're spinning that they are doing all of these wonderful things. They're spinning this line on affordable housing, which isn't reality, and even if it were, it would all be federal money. Also the Best Start program, the child care program: This government promised \$300 million of provincial money to be invested in child care in Ontario. Well, it's not in the 2005 budget; it's not here in Bill 197. Again, they're going to take credit for something Jack Layton got happening in the federal government with Paul Martin. They're taking credit for that program, but it's important for people to understand that the provincial commitment to the Best Start program has not actually flowed from their own coffers. That's a concern for the people of Ontario.

The budget is a big disappointment. Liberals need to listen to the people of Ontario.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon and talk a little bit about Bill 197. Obviously, as we move forward to the next budgetary cycle—I understand the Minister of Finance will be out on the road very shortly to undertake budget consultations—it's time we dealt with last year's budget bill, Bill 197, and move it forward.

I've listened with great interest to the various comments that have been made today, especially by those in the opposition ranks. Although there is so much I'd like to respond to, I want to pick up on what was said by my neighbour, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, for whom I have a tremendous amount of respect. The two of us, along with Mr. Arnott, the member for Waterloo–Wellington, work hard to represent the community and put partisan differences aside. But there was something she said today that got under my skin. She said this government has let down Waterloo region. I've got to tell you, as a Liberal MPP from Waterloo region, that I disagree with that. She is wrong. Our government has done great things for Waterloo region, and our region has benefited under the leadership of the McGuinty government.

Let me take a moment. Let's give a framework. What did we run on? We ran on a three-point plan: education, health care and creating a prosperous economy. Let's take a look at education. Since being elected, I've visited 27 schools in my riding, and I have never seen such a spirit of optimism before in the schools of this province and the schools of Waterloo region. After years and years of cuts under the previous government, we've come in not only with new resources but with policies which are helping teachers make sure that our students are prepared for the future.

But education doesn't simply begin at the elementary school level; you go back to child care. This summer I was proud to stand in Waterloo region and announce funding for 720 new spots, once again showing how Waterloo region has benefited from our government.

Then you come to health care. Again, we ran with a pledge to reform the system, which had suffered so badly under the previous government. We brought forward measures that really are aimed at two tracks: first, health prevention, where we've seen resources go to things like public health, we've seen legislation to stop smoking, we've seen initiative after initiative to keep people out of the health care system. As for the system itself, what has been the focus of our policy? It's been to stop equating health care with hospitals. By that I mean taking the pressure off the hospitals and having people receive the type of treatment they need in the community or by increased family doctors.

1710

Waterloo region had suffered under the previous government when it came to community health care. It seems that every week I'm standing in the community and announcing increased funding, oftentimes—I say this



to my friends in the NDP—for the first time in 12 years, for things like community mental health, for home care, for home supports, those unsung heroes in Raise Home Support or Meals on Wheels who go around and help the elderly to stay in their homes and out of institutions.

Now, that doesn't mean we have forgotten hospitals. In fact, I was shocked that the member for Kitchener-Waterloo would stand in this place and not mention the recent announcement of \$72 million for Grand River Hospital, which is going to bring huge improvements in terms of mental health services and in terms of cancer care for our region. It's the regional cancer care centre. It's also going to bring a new ICU. And she dares to stand and say that Waterloo region has suffered under this government.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** St. Mary's.

**Mr. Milloy:** St. Mary's Hospital has also gone ahead with capital, as my colleague points out.

The third part of our program was making sure we had a prosperous economy. I point to some of the initiatives that have taken place in our area. What about infrastructure? Mr. Speaker, when you see our community, one of the lifelines of the community, one of the main arteries, is Highway 401, and the exit from Highway 401 over Highway 8. Ever since I was elected, I've constantly received calls and delegations asking, when are we going to widen Highway 8? When are we going to take this crucial artery and make it more effective? Several months ago, I had the pleasure and honour, on behalf of the Minister of Transportation, to say that that project is going ahead—and of course the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. We are moving ahead with widening Highway 401.

We also see that a new courthouse is going to come to our region, something that people have said has been on the books for 10 years while the previous government was in office and that they thought would never come forward. We are moving ahead, with the support of the Attorney General and of the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

There was a lot of talk by my friend from the New Democratic Party about those who are less fortunate. Since my election, I've spent a lot of time with those in the social service agencies, with those who work with the less fortunate, and they have told me that the first step, the key in addressing some of those problems, is housing.

One of the proudest moments for me as the MPP for Kitchener Centre was when the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, as well as his federal counterpart, came to Kitchener Centre to partake in the announcement of the federal-provincial affordable housing agreement. We had about 70 to 80 housing activists out there that day to applaud this initiative, to applaud the fact that we are going to be moving forward with housing projects in our area. The region has predicted that, rather than creating 1,000 units—they have increased the prediction to 1,500 new affordable housing units for those in our area. Is there more to do on that file? Of course there is more to do, but I would expect that people would stand

up and applaud the fact that we are taking action. Those are the types of benefits we have seen in Waterloo region. To stand up and say that we haven't is ridiculous.

We need to move forward with this bill. Let's pass Bill 197. We'll get on with the type of budget consultation that is going to lead to even more initiatives coming forward. So I support this motion, and I say it's time we move on to begin the next budget cycle.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** This debate on time allocation is indeed interesting. We had quotes earlier in the day about the government when they were over here in opposition. The member for St. Catharines was very vocal about time allocation. This is a quote from the member for St. Catharines: "Mr Speaker, as you know, I have been consistent in opposing time allocation motions which come before the House. I think there would have to be extreme circumstances before an opposition party or an opposition person would vote for a time allocation motion." He goes on to say, "I think that's unhealthy, whether it's the Conservative, Liberal, New Democratic or any other party in power." It is "unhealthy." Well, that's part and parcel of this government's approach. It was unhealthy and it was inappropriate when they were over here. But that was then and this is now, and now that they're over there, it's perfectly all right. Now they believe in time allocation. It's the double standards that this government seems to have.

I well remember that when Chris Stockwell, a former Minister of Labour, Minister of the Environment, Speaker of the House—when his riding association supplied him with a bit of money for travel, the Liberal opposition over here went nuts. They said, "This is a terrible thing to do." It had been done by every party; it had been done by most members; it's continuing to be done by many members. But in this case, it was terrible.

Now, however, when the same thing happens to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, when it's found out that his riding association is supplying him with certain items like clothing, a new suit, that sort of thing, the double standards applied. It was a terrible thing when Chris Stockwell did it when we were in power, but when the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was caught with his hand in the cookie jar in the same process, it was fine; there was not a problem—the double standards that this government has, the double standards that revolve around what we are debating today, the time allocation motion.

This is a substantive bill that was introduced in May, as was pointed out earlier in the debate. Since May 1, this bill has had three days of debate in this House—none at all last spring. This is a substantive bill with 13 different schedules. It runs 68 pages long, and yet it didn't receive one day of debate last spring.

Now, this fall, all of a sudden it's a very important piece of legislation that has to be time-allocated and rammed through this House. I'm not opposed to time allocation. I think time allocation is a reasonable thing to do, in many cases when legislation has to be put through, when a concerted effort has been made to pass the bill. That hasn't happened with this piece of legislation. There



has not been a concerted, consistent effort to pass this piece of legislation. However, time allocation has been invoked. Although it was a terrible thing to do when we were in government, all of a sudden we've had a conversion. That was then; this is now. Now it's OK to do. It wasn't OK then.

This government continues to have double standards when they talk about government advertising. Oh, my goodness, if there was ever any government advertising when we were in power, it was a terrible thing using taxpayers' dollars to promote government programs. Well, you know, on the way in to Queen's Park here yesterday morning, what do I hear on the radio? I hear an advertisement talking about how wonderful the greenbelt is—the piece of legislation that created the greenbelt around Toronto—how wonderful it is and how everybody in Ontario is going to be saved because this greenbelt legislation is in place. It was blatant government advertising. But this government says, “We didn't do that advertising. An organization by the name of Friends of the Greenbelt did that advertising.”

Let's have a look at what Friends of the Greenbelt is. It's a charitable organization registered in Ontario, and it is fully funded. Every penny that it has is fully funded by the province of Ontario, by this Liberal government. So whether that money is spent by the Minister of Municipal Affairs promoting a piece of legislation that he has introduced or whether that money is spent by the Friends of the Greenbelt, which is fully funded by the Ontario taxpayers' hard-earned money, the result is the same: It's taxpayers' money that is paying for that advertising, something that this government said they wouldn't do and which they railed unendingly against when we did it in our government.

I think a government should be able to do a certain amount of that promotion. So I take no exception to the fact that they are doing it. What I take exception to is the continuing double standards of this government. What is the difference between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs spending this money and the Friends of the Greenbelt spending this money? It's all coming out of taxpayers' pockets. In and of itself, it's not wrong, but it's the double standards that this government continues to have.

1720

It also goes on into other areas as to how they conduct themselves as a government, whether the integrity that we expect a government to have comes to the fore. Under the Royal Group issue that came up, the then Minister of Finance was involved with that organization as a member of their board of directors. He sat on the board of directors and chaired the audit committee. Well, we suspected there was something amiss when things were coming in for the crunch, and some 20 or 22 months ago we brought this to the attention of the House. We asked the Premier a number of questions about it, and he said, “No, no, there's nothing there.”

When we were in government, whether it be Runciman, Wilson or Sampson, all of them stepped aside when controversy first appeared. When the slightest hint of controversy appeared, they stepped aside until an in-

vestigation cleared their names completely, even though they themselves were not directly responsible. In two cases, it was a member of their staff who had done something inappropriately, and in one case it was an issue of a name being mentioned in a throne speech. So none of the three was directly involved, but they immediately stepped aside.

But in the case of the Minister of Finance, the member for Vaughan—King—Aurora, did he step aside? No, he didn't, because in defending him, the Premier said there was not a direct link. In so saying, at the same time, he also took away the responsibility of the Minister of Finance for the Ontario Securities Commission. Well, if there wasn't a direct link, why did he have to take away the responsibility for the Ontario Securities Commission from the Minister of Finance at that time? Obviously, there was a double standard. It was not OK for any other government to do it, but this government said, “Oh, it's OK for us, because we know what we're doing and we're the rightful governors of this province anyway.” The arrogance of this government in such a short period of time is really awe-inspiring. They've come on in such a rush that it's difficult to imagine where they are going to be in the next few months, or indeed years.

Some of the conditions that affect Ontario are part and parcel of that arrogance. They don't see the problems that are developing within Ontario's economy. They don't understand that manufacturing jobs are the lifeblood of this province. It's those double standards and the arrogance of this government that are letting these things slip away and are causing some significant problems to develop for the people of Ontario, the hard-working taxpayers of Ontario, the people who obey the law and go to work every day.

In the last couple of weeks, while the Premier has been on a junket to China, I would point out that the Prescott Shirt Co. in Prescott, Ontario, has announced it is closing. They're the makers of the Hathaway shirt. This is a Hathaway shirt that I'm wearing.

**Ms. Scott:** Take it off.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** No, I think I'll leave my shirt on, thank you very much. But that plant is closing, and it will leave 53 people out of work and looking at a very sad Christmas. Sleeman Breweries, a very successful entrepreneur in Guelph, have announced their first layoff since their inception in 1988—the first layoff they've ever had. Some 40 people have been laid off by Sleeman Breweries. ATS, Automation Tooling Systems, is a company that is based in Cambridge. It's a leading-edge, high-tech manufacturer. It's closing its plant in Burlington. Forty people are going to be left out of work. Glis of Corunna, just outside of Sarnia, is a garment manufacturing plant and it's closing, with 35 people losing their work. A garment manufacturing plant: Where do you think those jobs are going? Would they be going to China, maybe? Maybe the Premier met some of the people over there who are going to be manufacturing the garments that Glis isn't going to be manufacturing any more. Waterloo-based Dalsa is laying off 60 people. This is the first time this company has ever downsized. KUS



Canada Inc. is a piston manufacturer that manufactures pistons for car engines in Leamington, Ontario, a rather small town in Ontario. It's closing down. It has announced that it's closing down and 127 people in the rather small town of Leamington are going to be looking for a new job.

A sad one here: The famous World's Finest Chocolate factory in Campbellford, Ontario, is closing, with 125 full-time employees being lost. Campbellford is a very small town; 125 jobs is a very significant number of jobs in that town. The Hershey plant in Smiths Falls is laying off 50 people. Glenoit in Elmira is closing, with 75 jobs lost. This company, Glenoit, is moving all of their equipment, packaging it up, putting it in a container, and it's going to China. I don't know, maybe the Premier saw this equipment when he was over there last week, but China is getting all of those jobs. Rheem Canada is closing their Hamilton-based headquarters: 150 people out of work. Harrowsmith cheese factory is closing: 89 people out of work. Ferranti-Packard in St. Catharines, where the government House leader is: 212 layoffs in St. Catharines. Redpath Sugar in Niagara Falls: 20 people laid off. Bazaar and Novelty in St. Catharines is closing their doors, with 200 people gone, out of work, not looking at a very happy Christmas.

ERCO Chemicals of Thunder Bay is closing, with 26 jobs—26 very high-paying jobs—in the north. Didn't the Premier, when he was running for election, promise to create jobs in the north? Here are 26 jobs in the north, high-paying jobs that he didn't create, that his electricity, his power policies, are driving out of the province. Nexen, another chemical plant in Amherstburg, down near Windsor, is closing, with 20 jobs gone. And of course Hemosol, in Mississauga—Hemosol manufactures artificial blood substitutes—is laying off 50 people. That will leave 22 employees. Like Ontario, Hemosol is bleeding to death under the policies of this government.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** It gives me great pleasure to be here to speak about Bill 197, and of course to support it. It's kind of sad: I sat here for the last couple of hours listening to some of the people from the opposition and the third party talk about all the bad things. It was interesting to hear the member from Beaches—East York. Even though he admitted he wasn't part of a government that imposed closure, he said it was OK for them to do it. Those are his exact words: "We did it, but it was OK." Go figure. But then that's what we're doing now. Then those guys on the other side, the members of the Conservative Party, are admitting it. God knows how many times it happened to them, but that was OK and it's not OK now.

It hurts to hear that this budget is a bad budget. I'm just wondering whether they took the time to read it. I just can't figure it out, because that's not what I hear on the streets in my riding of Northumberland. I just want to talk about a few things that were in the budget that resonate with the people, that they can feel, touch and that make a lot of sense.

1730

We heard from previous members of our government about some of our priorities, such as health care. Let's

talk about family health teams. I'm going to be a bit selfish and talk about family health teams in my riding. I had the opportunity of two family health teams in less than six months. As you know, they were just announced in the spring. I want to give you a report, Mr. Speaker. One of the family health teams has two new doctors and one registered nurse. It's in Brighton, where I live.

In the community of Campbellford, in the municipality of Trent Hills, just up the road from Brighton, a family health team is engaged in hiring two nurse practitioners, who are going to take an awful lot of the load and be able to see a lot of people who didn't have a family doctor before. That was part of our budget. How can they say that budget isn't good?

This is really the highlight, when we talk about primary health care and the way we are trying to reform it: Some seven or eight years ago, in the municipality of Port Hope, which happens to be the community farthest west in my riding, that government closed the Port Hope hospital. I can tell you that just two and a half years ago when I was campaigning door to door in Port Hope, it was very fresh in their minds. Every door I went to, they talked about the loss of their hospital. Do you know what? Their hospital wasn't even old. It wasn't all that old, and it served their community. I listened to their concerns. A hospital is very important to a community. We hear this over and over again.

Just last week I had the opportunity, on behalf of the Minister of Health, to announce a new community health centre for the municipality of Port Hope. It's not a hospital; we just could not do that. But they're going to get a community health centre, and not only that; at the same time, we announced a satellite community health centre for the eastern end of my riding in the municipality of Quinte West, in Trenton.

Once again, it really bothers me when I hear that this budget isn't a good budget: "We should delay it. We should debate it some more."

I want to carry on in health care a little bit more. Quinte Health Care has four hospitals. One touches the east end of my riding. They had done everything right under the previous government to rebuild the Belleville hospital, which happens to be in my good neighbour Ernie Parsons's riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, but it served my community as well, so I need to tell you about it. They had, I believe, three rubber cheques delivered to them to rebuild. But do you know what? We delivered a real cheque with the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the Minister of Health not too long ago. Ernie, Leona and I were there to make sure that hospital gets rebuilt.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph—Wellington):** A real cheque. You could take it to the bank.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** It's a real cheque. They are proceeding. The shovel is going into the ground probably in the spring—just unbelievable. So those are the types of things—and those folks tell us this budget's no good. I have no idea how to comprehend that.

Let me talk about what's in our budget to do with education. I have a lot of respect for teachers. I had the



opportunity to be a teacher, but I wasn't good enough; I couldn't do it. So I have a lot of respect for those folks. In the two short years I've sat in this House representing the people of my riding, I've had the opportunity to visit 40 classrooms, and I'm going to do some more this year. I speak to the kids, the teachers and the principals. I wasn't booted out of any school. I think they put out the red carpet when I show up. They really appreciate what we've done. There's a whole different approach when I go into a school now. I need to go back, though. The very first year that we were here and I started visiting schools, teachers, parents and principals were sceptical. When I went around this past year, it was a whole different perspective.

I don't have a college in my riding, but Loyalist College is in my good friend Ernie Parsons's riding of Prince Edward-Hastings, which borders my riding. A lot of folks use that great facility in Belleville. The president of the college, a very respected person in the community whom I know quite well—I visited the college about a month ago to do a little tour. They're just ecstatic. It's just unbelievable.

I'm going to repeat it again: When I hear that this budget wasn't good enough, I'm not sure that they had the opportunity to read it. I guess maybe they should take some time to read it.

Before I run out of time, because I have a long list here, I want to talk about a couple of statements that were made in this House just this past week. It kind of irks me a little bit—I guess that's parliamentary—that they make references to certain things, and they should really get their facts straight. My good friend from Beaches-East York mentioned some statements reported in one of my local papers, about a statement that I made in reference to MPAC, that I suggested seniors should sell their homes. Quite the contrary. Certainly the paper reported the way they wanted to report it, and it wasn't a quote. What I said is that I think it's every Ontarian's dream to own their own home. The statement I made—well, I have my own home, and some day when I get old and need some money, maybe that's my investment that I have to live on. The media interpreted it some other way, and so be it.

But I tell you, the seniors in my community are having a hard time meeting some of those increased costs to their property taxes. I tell you, both of my offices in my riding are working very, very hard to try to help them. It's tough. I'm delighted that the Ombudsman has taken the opportunity to review the operation of MPAC, and hopefully, at the end of the day we'll have a solution to help those things out.

I want to talk about a sad situation. It is sad, and I heard it repeated here tonight. One of the manufacturing plants, the World's Finest Chocolate in the municipality of Trent Hills, in Campbellford, just last Thursday announced their closure. It is sad to see some 100 jobs gone. I was informed just last Thursday night by Mayor Hector Macmillan from the municipality of Trent Hills, late Thursday night. We weren't able to connect; he left me a message. We finally touched base on Monday morning, and we discussed the situation. Of course, he

was heartbroken, because it's a small community. I tried to get some information about what happened: "How long have you known about this?" It was a shock to the community. It was a shock to the council, to the mayor, to their economic development folks. Totally blindsided—they had no idea this was going to happen.

I tell you, I offered the mayor my assistance as a member of this government to bring to the folks at the World's Finest Chocolate company, their principals—if there is anything I could do to help them with whatever. Unfortunately, the mayor hasn't gotten back to me. I believe the decision was made. So we've offered assistance. I'm not sure to what extent we could have helped, but the assistance was there. So those are some of the things that we need to put forward.

I'm going to go back to some of the comments they made—once again, I think they missed the point of the budget—about the lack of investment. I'm really being selfish here, talking about my riding tonight. I had the opportunity to announce this spring, as you know, 401 is six lanes to Port Hope, which is completed. Hopefully, this coming year—I know this coming year—I'll have the opportunity to announce that it will be six lanes from Port Hope to Cobourg, another section of the 401.

We talked about infrastructure. I share a lot with my neighbour from the east, Mr. Parsons, in the riding of Prince Edward-Hastings. We just announced a new consolidated courthouse for the Quinte area, which involves Belleville and the Trenton area, or Quinte West, which is in my riding. So it will be a joint courthouse to provide better security, better services to that legal framework. Once again, somehow those folks missed the point of those things that our budget will deliver.

One of things that's very dear to my heart is agriculture. I'm in a rural riding. They want to hear, "Well, you know, the budget was less." Well, the budget was more, \$50 million more on our baseline, plus all the money that we contributed to help the farmers with BSE—because it's one of those things that happen that we have no control over—and the oil and grain seed folks, who had a good crop but the prices were terrible. Our government came through to help them get over that hump. But I hear that we forgot about agriculture. The first Premier's summit with agriculture folks—I attended that meeting. Over 100 stakeholders had the opportunity to talk to the Premier right here at Queen's Park, and the Premier understands. I hear we're not dealing with agriculture. I think we are. I want to see this bill passed.

**1740**

**Mr. Martiniuk:** I'm pleased to address another time allocation motion brought by the government—this one on the budget bill. One of the most important assets of governing, of course, is a budget—it's probably the most important—and here we have another time allocation or closure, whichever you wish to use.

One of the problems with this budget is the lack of capital planning. There doesn't seem to be a plan put forth in this regard. About three or four months ago—this government seems to deal in announcements—there was this gigantic announcement of \$100 billion to be spent on



capital, not over the next two years, which is what this government has to go, not over the next five, 10, 15 or 20 years. No. It was over the next 30 years—\$100 billion. I was just amazed at the rounded numbers. How does one arrive at \$100 billion over 30 years? Well, you take \$3 billion and multiply it until you come out with a round figure. It could have been 40 or 50 years, but it worked out to 30. I called it a hoax, and I still think the announcement was a hoax, because it was no plan; it was a grandiose number thrown out to see if some votes could be garnered.

Why is it important to Cambridge that there is no plan? Cambridge is a city of 120,000 people, and growing rapidly. It is the home of Toyota and of the only Lexus built outside Japan, and the home of Canadian General-Tower and numerous other high-tech industries. We have many commuters who drive back and forth to Toronto. However, more people drive into Cambridge each morning to work than drive out.

We have a fine hospital; the Cambridge Memorial Hospital is renowned as one of the most efficient community hospitals in Ontario. But all we've had at the hospital since this government was elected is cutbacks. We suffered, of course, the cutbacks to chiropractic, physiotherapy and eye exams that the rest of the population has. But in addition to that, we had a very important service called a wellness centre at the hospital, which, due to inadequate funding by the Ministry of Health, had to be eliminated. Many people still have not found alternate methods of coping with their maladies.

One of our big needs was expansion of the hospital, because our municipality is growing rapidly, if not one of the fastest-growing areas in Ontario. We have three hospitals, and there is a regional health system. Way back in the early part of the last government's reign, the Health Services Restructuring Commission was established to go around the province, study each area and come up not just with recommendations but with detailed plans as to how each area should proceed.

That was done in our area. Certain recommendations were made to bring services back home to our region for the first time. Cardiac care was located at St. Mary's; a cancer centre was located in Kitchener, at Grand River; and for the first time Cambridge was to receive an increased number of beds, plus a psychiatric centre, which we have no facilities for at the present time. That was a mandate of that commission, and it was subsequently approved by the Ontario government, as it then was.

So what happened? We started preparing a site and monies were expended on site preparation. The next thing that happened was that plans were drawn up for this \$80-million expansion of improvements to emergency and a whole new wing. Individuals went out and raised money—a lot of money. The city of Cambridge contributed a sum of money. The region of Waterloo, because it was a regional centre, contributed a sum of money. Generous citizens within our whole region reached deep into their pockets to raise their share of the monies required for this hospital. Some \$23 million was raised, and that money is presently sitting in the bank.

What happened? Well, this government has decided that Cambridge does not need a hospital, or, in actual fact, they've admitted the need for the hospital expansion but said they can't at this time. Knowing full well that it had the approval of the former government, they continue to degrade the system of health within the region of Waterloo. They do this knowing full well that, first, the immediate cause is going to make it much more difficult to attract new doctors. We live in an underserved area, Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge and the townships. We don't have enough doctors, and now this government is preventing us from attracting new doctors.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

The first question to be decided is the amendment to the motion. Mr. Caplan has moved that the motion be amended by deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor:

"That at 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and"

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The second question to be decided is the main motion, as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House that government notice of motion number 30, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call on the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those members in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Rinaldi, Lou
Bryant, Michael	Fonseca, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Gerretsen, John	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Kular, Kuldeep	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Kwinter, Monte	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craiton, Kim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wong, Tony C.
Delaney, Bob	Levac, Dave	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Millroy, John	
Duguid, Brad	Phillips, Gerry	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Miller, Norm
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Horwath, Andrea	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 31; the nays are 12

**The Acting Speaker:** The motion, as amended, is carried.

It being past 6 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday, November 21, 2005.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	<b>Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)</b> Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick</b> (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton</b> (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George</b> (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim</b> (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Toronto–Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	<b>Arnott, Ted</b> (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Parkdale–High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard</b> (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Whitby–Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra</b> (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight</b> (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte</b> (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph</b> (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Vacant
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)		
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V.</b> (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse		
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry</b> (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J.</b> (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael</b> (L) Attorney General / procureur général		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

## STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

### **Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco,  
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, Jim Wilson  
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of Ontario**

Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 21 November 2005**

**Lundi 21 novembre 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 21 November 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 21 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### SPECIAL CARE HOMES

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** Throughout Ontario, hundreds of vulnerable adults live in homes for special care. These homes provide a warm, secure, stable and friendly environment for fragile Ontarians, allowing them to lead fulfilling lives. The alternative for many of these individuals is a life of homelessness on the street.

The homes that these vulnerable Ontarians live in are mostly run by individual owner-operators who provide a home life, not an institutional life.

Special care homes have only had a single 3% increase since 1999. The funding they receive in no way matches the rising costs they face, particularly as the homes provide services well beyond just shelter and food. The owner-operators of special care homes want to be able to provide the care and services that vulnerable adults need. They cannot do this without a reasonable increase in funding from the government.

The Liberal government promised in the Ontario election that it would "significantly increase supportive housing options for those suffering from mental illness." I call on the government to bring in an immediate increase in funding to homes for special care. They provide much more than good value for money: They give vulnerable adults a home where they can live a safe, secure and meaningful life.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Even as a person who considers himself to be the world's oldest teenager, I find it a challenge at times to know exactly what our young people are up to these days, so I made a list of observations over the past week.

I had the privilege of presenting Ontario volunteer awards several weeks ago to an overwhelming number of young people who had contributed to their community:

—On Halloween just past, significant numbers of young people served to monitor the streets and guard and make sure that everything was being done safely.

—Our food banks in this community depend on young people and their contributions.

—In community kitchens in my community we have young volunteers, especially for this coming Christmas Day.

—Many, many of our seniors benefit from young people coming in and spending some time with them, and in fact having a grandparent-grandchild role.

—The Water for Katrina project that we undertook: Young people brought in their paper route money or their part-time employment money to make sure that people in the southern US had water to drink.

—Volunteers in our hospitals: We could not do without them.

—Our air, sea and army cadets: tremendous young people contributing to their community and to their country.

—Book buddies in schools: high school students who help elementary students to read.

—Library volunteers, over and over: I'm thinking of the Stirling library and the number of volunteers there.

—We have native dancers on our reserve who preserve their culture.

—The student trustees who sit on each school board: By their time, given freely, they contribute so much to the school system.

—Our young people organize, coach and referee sports.

Our country is in good hands and has a great future because of the tremendous quality of young people we have in this province.

#### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** On the very first day the House resumed sitting this fall, I informed members of the tornadoes that had touched down in Waterloo-Wellington in late August, causing catastrophic damage in Centre Wellington and Mapleton townships.

While I've expressed appreciation to the Minister of Community Safety and the Minister of Municipal Affairs for their willingness to tour the devastated areas of my riding and I have expressed our appreciation to the Premier for his assurance of the government's support in a telephone conversation we had on September 9, I must now inform the House that the government's initial response of \$335,100 in disaster assistance is completely and totally insufficient.

Two weeks ago, I wrote an open letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs asking that he revisit this matter. Today I'm asking him to consider the comments in a

letter he has received from Mayor John Green of the township of Mapleton. Mayor Green writes, "While we appreciate the initial assistance of \$152,600, we are somewhat disappointed that this amount falls far short of the overall uninsured damages to public infrastructure, including costs incurred by the county of Wellington and the Grand River Conservation Authority."

I know that the government does not want to appear to be callously indifferent in response to a natural disaster occurring within the province, and I had confidence in the Premier's statements to me and Mayors John Green and Russ Spicer. I hope that my confidence was not misplaced. Therefore, I call upon the Minister of Municipal Affairs to invite representatives from the affected townships, the county of Wellington and the GRCA to meet with him and, at that meeting, announce an increase in the special assistance grant to my communities.

### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** Earlier this month, there was a very special graduation held at the Marty Karl Centre in downtown Hamilton. On November 4, 16 students completed a 22-week job and life skills training course aimed at easing the transition for Hamiltonians living on social assistance to finding real, meaningful employment.

In 2001, Statistics Canada counted 14,533 Hamiltonians living on social assistance and facing physical or mental barriers to employment. Programs like this prepare people for the transition back to work and provide guidance and support for six months after they re-enter the workforce. This course boasts an 88% success rate, with graduates finding employment with companies like Dofasco, Swiss Chalet and even McMaster University.

We all need support in our lives. We all need friends and family to encourage us and to support us in our careers, no matter what path we choose. When such supports are missing in one's life, it is refreshing to know that there are places like the Marty Karl Centre that offer a helping hand.

I would like to take this time to congratulate the 16 graduates of the Marty Karl Centre's training program and to wish them the best of luck as they embark on this new journey in life. Programs like these, generously supported by our government, ensure that we are one step closer to eradicating poverty and demonstrate the caring and progressive community that is the hallmark of Hamilton.

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** This year, Ontario has witnessed a record-high number of gun homicides. As the shootings mounted this summer, the Premier and his Attorney General chose to go into hibernation. A collection of poorly planned initiatives and announcements that lack detail have since followed. However, the violence has continued, and after the events of last

Friday, Ontarians have seen gun violence go to a whole new level. Once again, we've heard nothing from the Premier. The McGuinty Liberals are asleep at the switch on crime.

1340

Today, the Ontario Medical Association has released a report that says that Ontario's doctor shortage is worsening and that our health care system could collapse under the pressure of this single issue. The McGuinty Liberals are asleep at the switch on the doctor shortage.

Also today, we heard that the emergency room waiting times in Ontario are out of control, and in some cases causing death. This despite an empty promise by the current Premier to lower wait times. The McGuinty Liberals are asleep at the switch on emergency room wait times.

Today at Queen's Park, we've heard more about gridlock and its effect on the Ontario economy. However, the Premier's solution to gridlock is to use the private plane to fly from Toronto to Hamilton, leapfrogging all the gridlock on the QEW. The McGuinty Liberals are asleep at the switch on gridlock.

On the jobs front, plant closures and layoffs by major provincial employers like GM and Ford seem of no priority to the Premier. We are now told that thousands of layoffs lie on the horizon for Ontario's auto industry. The McGuinty Liberals are asleep at the switch on jobs.

### DISASTER RELIEF

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** Not so long ago, at the end of the summer, this government turned its back on Hamilton's plea for help. My city asked for disaster relief following incredible flooding damage from a major storm on August 19.

Hamilton wasn't being unreasonable. Hamiltonians simply asked for help for costs not covered by property insurance, including cleanup and repairs to residences and businesses. But what was the response? Hamilton residences and businesses got nothing but a callous, negative reply from the provincial McGuinty Liberals.

Hamilton has once again been struck by misfortune by way of a natural disaster, and this time the province must come through with some financial assistance. The city was struck by a tornado on November 9. It cut a swath through several residential neighbourhoods, which suffered extensive damage. Winds from the tornado reached as high as 170 kilometres per hour. It ripped roofs off houses, toppled trees, hurled motor homes and fencing through the air, cleaving a path of destruction from the east mountain to lower Stoney Creek. Lawfield middle school was wrenched right off its foundation and needs to be completely rebuilt.

The province simply cannot turn its back on Hamilton again. Rebuilding Lawfield middle school alone will cost close to \$10 million. Some homes were rendered unliveable due to damage from the winds and flying debris. Cars were mangled, windows blown out, trees uprooted and roofs lost. The McGuinty Liberals should do the right thing for Hamilton. This tornado caused



extensive damage; the city and its residents need provincial help. Provide provincial assistance through the Ontario disaster relief assistance program so that the necessary repairs and rebuilding are undertaken swiftly and effectively.

#### GARTH TAYLOR

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** Today, I pay tribute to a man who has done what all of us here aspire to do: He made a difference. I speak of the late Dr. Garth Taylor, who, until his death this past Saturday, served as chief of ophthalmology at the Cornwall Community Hospital in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh.

In addition to treating patients in Cornwall, Dr. Taylor taught ophthalmology at Queen's University in Kingston. His students learned that most of those in danger of losing their eyesight could be treated by simple, low-cost medical techniques. Dr. Taylor considered it a moral obligation to help those around the world who lacked access to these treatments. Through his work with Orbis International, Dr. Taylor undertook numerous overseas missions, conducting sight-saving surgeries in some 60 countries.

Dr. Taylor faced and overcame racism in his drive to help the less fortunate of the world, sharing his vision of a world where people are judged on the merit of their skills rather than on their ethnicity. His professionalism was blind to all but the needs of his patients.

Dr. Garth Taylor has been honoured by Orbis International. He is one of Macleans magazine's 10 Canadians who made a difference in 2004, and recently received the Order of Jamaica, his home country's highest honour. To his countless patients, students and his community, he was a visionary.

It is my honour to recognize this great man today. Through his selfless actions and determination to better our world by his skills, Dr. Taylor touched the lives of countless thousands. Through them, his legacy of commitment and compassion will live on. The sympathy of the community is extended to his wife, children and family.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I recently sat down with York regional police chief Armand La Barge. The purpose of our meeting was to have a candid conversation about policing and community safety issues that affect my constituents and, in fact, all Ontarians.

As of November 15, there have been 69 murders, of which 48 are gun-related deaths in the GTA. This government knows it has to be tough on crime. Recent initiatives include the gun amnesty program, the gangs and guns task force, stronger sentencing, 1,000 additional police officers, and requests to the federal government to amend a number of reforms to firearms offences in the Criminal Code.

Gun violence is not the only problem facing Ontarians. Marijuana grow-ops, massage parlours fronting for

prostitution, home invasions, bullying and gang violence are among the issues that communities across Ontario have to face. This government has made great strides in addressing these issues from a legislative perspective; however, these criminal acts cannot be eliminated by legislation alone. Every member of the community—civil servant or civilian—needs to participate in keeping communities safe.

Chief La Barge and I discussed the need for communities to get involved. People need to be informed about criminal activity, know what to look for, and be prepared to report any suspicious activity in their neighbourhoods. With strong legislation, a devoted police force, and communities committed to keeping their streets safe, Ontario can continue to be one of the safest—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** Recently I had the opportunity to address about 100 journalism students at Durham College as a guest speaker for their Canadian government course. The class was filled with enthusiastic and keen undergraduates eager to learn about the interaction between provincial, municipal and federal government activities.

The visit also gave me an opportunity to reflect on the McGuinty government's support for Ontario's post-secondary students. Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology have received significant capital funding from our government to support a rapidly growing student body.

I spoke with Dr. Gary Polonsky, the president of Durham College and UOIT, and with Thomas Coughlan, the president of the united student association. They wish to thank Premier McGuinty and Minister Bentley for the Reaching Higher plan. Colleges have been organizing and continue to organize events in their communities to encourage discussions on skills strategies to ensure that Ontario's workforce is prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. According to Dr. Polonsky, this plan will greatly benefit students and it will also benefit the research capacity for strategic sectors in Durham; for example, the auto manufacturing sector and energy.

The students at Durham College have proven to me that our government's commitment to Ontario's post-secondary students will continue to foster the brightest minds in the country.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Standing order 62(a) provides that the standing committee on estimates shall present one report with respect to all of

the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 59 and 61 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.

The House not having received a report from the standing committee on estimates for certain ministries on Thursday, November 17, 2005, as required by the standing orders of this House pursuant to standing order 62(b), the estimates before the committee of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported and received by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PHYSICAL FITNESS DAY ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE L'APTITUDE PHYSIQUE

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 32, An Act proclaiming Physical Fitness Day /  
Projet de loi 32, Loi proclamant la Journée de l'aptitude physique.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Today we are all quite aware of the issue of obesity and how it affects the termination of life. Even this government recognizes that it's important for our students to have physical activities every single day. This bill simply proclaims the first Friday in September as Physical Fitness Day, and I commend it to your reading.

1350

### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (ORGAN DONATION EDUCATION), 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (ÉDUCATION SUR LE DON D'ORGANES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to education on organ donation / Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation à l'égard de l'éducation sur le don d'organes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member may have a brief statement.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** The bill amends the Education Act, permitting the minister to establish an organ donation education policy framework, and requires school boards to include education on the importance of organ donation in the curriculum of students in the senior division, such that every student, subject to certain expectations, who receives their OSSD will have learned

the importance of organ donation. I can only say that we need more of this. To fulfill our needs in this province, we need to start somewhere, and I think this is the place to do so.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** This is a breakthrough day for the people and the government of Ontario, and for the thousands of immigrants we welcome to our province each year. Just hours ago, I joined my federal counterpart, Minister Volpe, in signing the first-ever Canada-Ontario immigration agreement.

First of all, I would like to thank Premier Dalton McGuinty for his relentless efforts in putting Ontario's newcomers front and centre in his fight for fairness. This is the first major breakthrough in the hard-fought \$23-billion gap campaign led by our Premier.

This is indeed a proud day for all of us. We are the first Ontario government to sign an immigration agreement with the federal government. Ontario's newcomers will finally get their fair share of federal funding for services to help them get started, such as settlement services and language training.

Our government is dedicated to helping newcomers reach their full potential in Ontario. Ontario, as you know, welcomes over 125,000 newcomers every year. That's about the population of Prince Edward Island. We welcome more than half of all immigrants to Canada. This milestone agreement means a great deal to those people who choose Ontario as their home. It quadruples federal funding from \$819 per immigrant for settlement and language programs to over \$3,400 per immigrant. That's a total of \$925 million over the next five years.

This will mean expanded career-focused English-as-a-second-language training. There will be more work-focused ESL classes at higher levels so newcomers will learn the language they need to work in their professions. This will benefit as many as 30,000 more newcomers. Settlement services will also be expanded to locations such as community centres or malls in main street Ontario to reach more newcomers in their neighbourhoods.

Towns and cities will also be given funding to promote many parts of Ontario, big and small, on a new Ontario government Web site for immigrants. This is the first agreement to also involve municipalities in planning and discussions on immigration. From AMO to the city of Toronto, this agreement demonstrates that all three levels of government can work together on programs for immigrants in regions across Ontario.

Ontario's newcomers have incredible skills and an incredible drive to find jobs and raise their families. This



agreement will allow Ontario to nominate prospective immigrants who have the talents Ontario needs to stay competitive and grow our economy.

Ontario's newcomers and the front-line community-based settlement agencies have been waiting a long, long time for this agreement, and so have the government of Ontario and the people of Ontario. This government is dedicated to helping Ontario's newcomers reach their full potential and build a better life for themselves and their families. This landmark agreement will help Ontario's newcomers succeed. We know full well that when newcomers succeed, when they find a job, when they are welcomed into communities, all of Ontario succeeds. Again, I want to say this is indeed a most positive, historic day for the province of Ontario and for all Ontarians.

### RENEWABLE FUELS

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to announce that the government was successful in securing another 975 megawatts of clean, green renewable electricity for Ontario as a result of our second request for proposals for renewable energy. The response by the private sector was tremendous. While we were seeking up to 1,000 megawatts of clean, green renewable power, we received proposals that were well over 2,000 megawatts.

I'm pleased to report to the House that we have now signed agreements for nine new energy projects. Eight of these are wind power projects and one is water power, for a combined total capacity of 975 megawatts. To put this in perspective, 975 megawatts of clean, green, renewable power is enough electricity for over 250,000 homes. Together with the 395 megawatts achieved in our first request for proposals for renewable energy, these nine projects will have a combined capacity of 1,370 megawatts, exceeding our commitment to generate 1,350 megawatts of renewable energy.

With the leadership of this government, we are making Ontario a leader in wind power in Canada. With this announcement we are increasing Ontario's wind power capacity 80-fold and more than doubling Canada's current wind power production. We will continue to bring more renewable energy on-line.

This additional renewable energy will move us further toward our 2010 goal of generating 2,700 megawatts of renewable energy. All these renewable projects will have a tremendous benefit for Ontario's economy and Ontario's environment. The projects will spur economic development in the renewable energy sector and will bring an estimated \$2 billion of new investment to Ontario. If we include the economic benefits of our first RFP, these projects have a total estimated value of \$2.7 billion.

Renewable energy projects help diversify our supply, reduce our transmission costs and reduce peak load demands. These projects will provide tax revenues to municipalities, create jobs in rural communities and offer

income to farmers and other landowners. These projects will help clean up our environment by reducing our dependency on fossil fuels and will advance our Kyoto obligations. This is another major step forward for renewable power in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Responses?

1400

### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I want to speak today on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants living in Ontario who have come to Canada, and specifically Ontario, under false expectations—expectations that have been set by an immigration system that places priority on advanced education, professional training and career experience. I speak on behalf of those immigrants because we have thousands of those people in our communities today who expected that they would be able to come here and make positive contributions to their communities, and they are today seeking to make a living on behalf of their families. They cannot become integrated into their communities because we have a system that puts up barriers to their becoming involved in their professions and getting jobs in this province today.

This announcement today carries a big number that surely will impress some, and it's going to give much-needed headlines to a federal government that is on the eve of an election. With the multibillions of federal surplus, the question I have is, why has this minister signed an agreement that is going to take five years to phase in?

This announcement today is couched with waffle words that mean nothing to the fathers and mothers who are desperate for an opportunity to earn an income and to work in their professions. Former governments tried to sign agreements and to get the federal government to the table. They were unable to do that. This government has tried for two years, and not until the eve of a federal election did the Premier allow himself to be used by the federal government as a campaign tool to go into this next election.

Finally, Minister, you admitted in estimates that you would have no control over how these funds would be spent. You admitted in estimates that these funds would not be controlled by the Ontario government, that they would be transferred directly to settlement agencies. I say to you, that is letting the people of Ontario and taxpayers down. You have not done a good job in negotiating this agreement—not at all—on behalf of the people of this province.

### RENEWABLE FUELS

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** John Tory and the opposition are completely in favour of renewable energy solutions. What Ontario citizens want, however, is reliable, safe and affordable energy for the future.

Minister, your policies are a clear indication today that we are going to have short supply and higher prices. This

troubles Ontario. Renewable is laudable, but most of the experts would tell you, and I'm sure you know, that this is often referred to as an intermittent power source, not to form part of the base load. This is clearly no solution. One third of the energy from wind is not available most of the time. The other part of the equation is, at what price?

You should know that our critic, John Yakabuski, is actually in Atikokan today. He's trying to settle Atikokan as well as the troubled communities where not only the pulp and paper industries are worried about your policies.

Minister, this file that you have is clearly mismanaged under your leadership and under the prior Minister of Energy's as well. I can tell you with some certainty that Ontario is indeed disappointed to this point in time, not just with the policy announcement today and the fact that it's too little, too late.

The ultimate question that remains in everyone's mind is, when will we see some of this new energy on the grid? This summer, we had enumerable blackouts, near blackouts and brownouts. We've seen hundreds of jobs lost in the pulp and paper, forestry and petrochemical industries; in fact, our natural resource industry is struggling under the high prices of this government.

Minister, when are you going to tell the people of Ontario the other part of this RFP process: energy at what price? The people of Ontario, indeed the businesses of Ontario, are depending on your having an effective energy policy as we move forward. You know this policy is all about our economy, and you are putting it at great risk. I'm disappointed in this announcement today.

#### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** It's amazing what an upcoming federal election will do to bring about an agreement that for two years the federal and provincial Liberals could not manage to get. It's what James Travers in the *Toronto Star* called an election piñata, full of goodies and promises in return for another Liberal mandate.

Let's get to the real issue that is of importance to immigrants. Since 1980, the percentage of immigrants living below the poverty line has risen from 17% to 20%, while the trend for non-immigrants tracked down below 15%. Immigrants are less likely to be consistently employed, enjoy the benefits of belonging to a union or be well paid. In fact, more than 35% of those who have lived here for less than five years earn low incomes.

Why does it take new immigrants today more than 10 years to catch up with their Canadian peers? Very simply, neither the federal nor the provincial government has concrete plans to deal with immigrant poverty, re-vamp the settlement sector or allow professionals trained abroad to practise their professions in this country. In spite of the good intentions, more money will not change the fact that there is no concrete plan to improve the lot of immigrants in this province. Even though the ministry has more money, the Ministry of Citizenship does not

have, in my view, the expertise or the leverage to provide foreign-trained professionals living in Ontario with accreditation and jobs.

In the 2003 campaign platform, McGuinty made the following promise: "We will require that all Ontario trades and professions accelerate the entry of qualified new Canadians. If after one year any profession or trade has not eliminated barriers to entry, we will act."

Two years into the Liberal mandate, and only a few weeks ago, I questioned the Minister of Citizenship in estimates about his ministry's progress in the different professional fields. By his answers, it was clear to me that very little progress has been made. With all due respect, the minister is just talking with different regulatory bodies, but has gotten nowhere in terms of licensing foreign-trained professionals—professional engineers, teachers, doctors or social workers. By his own admission, he said that he had little power over licence-granting bodies.

When the Liberals promised action, immigrants were expecting more than discussion and talk; they wanted to practise their profession. You have some money now; it will do some useful things. Let's see you come up with a real plan.

#### RENEWABLE FUELS

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To respond to the Minister of Energy: another day in the Legislature and another day where the McGuinty government tries to pretend that an announcement makes up for the lack of an electricity policy. Here we have another dribble, another drab, but still no plan and no policy for the supply of electricity or the price of electricity in Ontario. The McGuinty government wants to pretend that they are defenders of a public electricity system, but what we see now is private, profit-driven nuclear at the Bruce, and private, profit-driven companies in all of the announcements today. What do we know that this does to the price of electricity? We know that wherever you find privately owned, profit-driven electricity, it's at least 20% more expensive than publicly owned, not-for-profit electricity. So every day, as the McGuinty Liberal government makes these announcements, more and more of our electricity system is passing into the hands of profit-driven private companies, and the price of electricity is being driven through the roof.

When I listen to the Minister of Energy make these announcements, it's as if she doesn't hear the pulp and paper mills across northern Ontario, which keep saying to the McGuinty government, "It's the price. The price is too high. The price is driving us out of business. The price is causing the layoff of thousands of workers." It's as if the McGuinty government didn't hear General Motors when earlier this year they said that their hydro bill at the Oshawa plant is 93% higher than it was two years ago. So what has GM announced today? The layoff of over 3,000 workers.

Minister, you can make these announcements over and over again, but you're still missing the point. Your policy



of driving electricity rates through the roof is killing thousands of good-paying manufacturing jobs in Ontario—the pulp industry, the steel industry and now the auto sector. These announcements—a drib here, a drab there—are no excuse. They are no substitute for a real electricity policy in the province of Ontario.

1410

GORDON SMITH

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for a member of each party to speak for up to five minutes to recognize the passing of former member of provincial Parliament Gordon Smith.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I want to say to the House that it is indeed an honour for me to stand here today and pay tribute to a former member of this House, Gordon Elsworth Smith, who passed away earlier this year, in June, after contracting pneumonia at the age of 86.

Gord was born in November 1918, and that was the beginning of a life full of many, many accomplishments. As a young man, Gord became involved in a wide range of ideas and topics that interested him. As his close friend and former CFRB radio personality Pete McGarvey has said, “Gord Smith was quite simply a giant in the 20th century life of Orillia. He was a man of vision, passion and energy, blessed with huge talents in mechanics, electronics, music and the art of living, a man endowed with common sense and the common touch.”

Gord actually started into radio at the age of 18 in Kitchener. In 1942 he started a Parry Sound radio station and, as far as I know, was the youngest person to ever own a radio station up to that point. He moved that station to Orillia in 1945 and it became known as CFOR. It's now called JACK-FM; it's one of the Rogers stations. Gord actually operated that station until 1964. After that, he operated a Volkswagon dealership in Orillia and had that dealership until 1971.

But to the city of Orillia's and the riding of Simcoe East's credit, Gord became an impressive member of the provincial Legislature. He ran in 1967. As a strong community leader and an excellent constituency member, he easily won four elections as the member for Simcoe East. His Premiers at that time of course were the Honourable John Robarts and the Honourable William Davis.

Gord retired as the MPP for Simcoe East in 1981, but soon after was appointed as a justice of the peace and served both the Orillia and Midland parts of the riding.

I want to say a couple of things about Gord Smith while I'm here today on just what kind of constituency person he really was. I can remember that as a very young guy we needed some severance work done on some land we owned and there were some problems with the township. My dad called Gord and asked him if there was any chance he could meet him some time or write a

letter or whatever needed doing, and Gord actually came to our house for breakfast on a Sunday morning and talked about the issue. I thought at that point, if that's the kind of constituency person you've got in an MPP, that shows you what a great man he was.

I have to tell you very briefly that I also ran into Gord as a JP. He actually fined me \$25 one time. I never had a proper hydro permit. I pled guilty and I paid the \$25, but I wanted to put that on the record. I don't want any skeletons in my closet.

He retired in 1995 as a JP at the age of 75 and he kept a very active lifestyle after that. He had a huge collection of antique cars, including a Stanley Steamer, and was present in all of the fall fairs and parades etc. that we had in Orillia. He was an active member of the Kiwanis Golden K and the Champlain Golden K, and in music, where he played piano in a band right up until his death. In fact, just last January, Sean Conway was the guest speaker at the Sir John A. Macdonald dinner, and Sean acknowledged Gord. Gord was playing the piano that evening and Sean, who was the guest speaker, paid a very special tribute to Gord that evening.

I just want to say that he's missed already in the city of Orillia and in the community.

I want to introduce his family who are here today. They've come from great distances to be with us. I know Gord's wife, Jean, is no longer with us, but his children are here today: Linda and her husband, Murray Finn, of Elliot Lake, and Paul is here as well, from Vancouver. He was a speechwriter with the Davis and Robarts governments for a couple of years. John and Susan Smith of Hanover are here. John and Susan's children—Martha, and her husband, Dan, and son, Andrew, and his friend Jessica—and Susan's mother, Elma, of Orillia, all are here in the audience today. They came a great distance to be part of this.

In closing, on behalf of our caucus and, I hope, on behalf of all members of this House, we thank the Smith family for being here and for allowing their father to serve in this wonderful House for 14 years of his life. Thank you very much, everyone.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm proud, on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park, to be able to pay tribute to this truly great Ontarian, this outstanding member of the provincial Legislature, this pioneer in radio broadcasting in the province of Ontario and in this country—a man who, when he announced his retirement in 1981, said it was because of ill health, and that was at the age of 62. Well, for decades after that, Gord Smith continued to serve his community, continued to be a dear and loved member of his family and continued to be very much on the leading edge, quite frankly, of anything and everything he did.

I was fortunate to be able to call upon people like Elizabeth Diehl, one of our staff people who goes back to when Gord Smith was here in this Legislature. My predecessor Mel Swart fondly recalls his service, along with so many others in an era when politics was, in many respects, far more colourful, far more intimate and far more collegial.

I want to tell the Smith family that Gord Smith was held in regard by members of every political party and certainly by his own colleagues. I not only talked to the people involved in the political scene but spoke as well—and came across this person just by happenstance—to someone who appeared in front of His Worship, Justice of the Peace Smith. That was before I learned that Garfield Dunlop was a scofflaw of some notoriety up in his riding. The gentleman I spoke to and his version of the events is oh, so consistent with scofflaw Garfield Dunlop—“outlaw Dunlop,” I suppose he might be known as from this point on. As a lawyer, I should have reminded him that you never confess, and here he’s done it in Hansard. The recipient of His Worship’s justice whom I spoke with recalled that justice as being handed out in an extremely polite and courteous way, in a kind and temperate way, and tempered with good nature and a true concern for the welfare of the community.

We all know about the Stanley Steamer, but perhaps more significant was the 1912 Tudhope steamer that Gord Smith himself restored, and of special significance because Tudhope, as one of Canada’s earliest automobile manufacturers, had its home in Orillia. Among the scores and scores of antique automobiles that he restored and maintained and that he shared with his community in parade after parade and in public event after public event, it is this Tudhope that I’m sure had a special spot in Gord Smith’s heart.

There’s a Toronto Liberal politician—I can’t remember his name off the top of my head—who doesn’t let people forget that he brought the Rolling Stones to Toronto. Let me tell you, that pales in comparison to bringing Bob Hope to Orillia in 1957 to flick the switch at Gord Smith’s radio station when they doubled the wattage it put out. Think about it, my friends: In 1957, Bob Hope was bigger than the Beatles, the Stones and Bob Dylan combined. Gord Smith, as a broadcaster, sensitive to the Canadiana around him and immersed in Canadian culture, had the very earliest live broadcast of Canadian icon Gordon Lightfoot, himself yet another native son of Orillia.

So Gord Smith was truly somebody who deserves this eulogizing here at Queen’s Park today. He served his community and his province with joy, with wit, with kindness and with maturity. He was a Progressive Conservative, and he had the regard of his allies and his opponents. He served well beyond what could be expected. He also served in an era when constituency budgets were non-existent. So we have to recall that his wife, your mother, played such an important role, as spouses did for MPPs in those days, answering the phone, doing constituency work on their own behalf, and I’m sure his kids were involved with that on more than a few occasions as well. So I salute your mom. We all salute your dad, and we tell you that we’re proud to be in the place where he served with such dignity and served so many people for so long.

1420

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I rise today to pay

tribute to one of our own, Gordon Smith, who was a member of this Legislature from 1967 to 1981. While I did not have the honour of knowing or serving with Mr. Smith personally, I do know that he was a credit to this House and to politics.

I have to say that, reading about him, he was my kind of guy. He was the kind of man any of us would be privileged to know, a man of wide-ranging interests and dedication. He was first elected for the Conservatives in the riding of Simcoe East in 1967 and was re-elected in 1971, 1975 and 1977. He served as the deputy whip, chair of caucus and deputy chairman of the committee of the whole House. As a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Industry and Tourism, he travelled on trade missions to China, Cuba, England, Japan and the Soviet Union. When a heart condition forced him to retire from politics in 1981, Gordon Smith said, “The only thing closer to me than my riding is my family.”

I’m told he was a man of many interests and enthusiasm. When he was 18, he began a career in radio in Kitchener and later became the youngest Canadian to own a radio station. In 1942, he moved the radio station from Parry Sound to Orillia and operated there until 1964, when he sold it to Maclean Hunter. After that sale, many people would probably be tempted to retire, but not Gordon Smith. He went on to operate a car dealership until 1971. Cars were one of his major passions. At one point, he owned about 50 antique cars and machines. His favourite, as we’ve heard, was a 1911 Stanley Steamer.

After politics, he served as a justice of the peace in the provincial offences court. Even in his twilight years, he played piano for the Golden K seniors’ orchestra, the Music Makers. Pete McGarvey, the long-time program director for CFOR, said, “He was a man of vision, passion and energy, blessed with huge talents in mechanics, electronics, music and the art of living, a man with common sense and the common touch.”

Gordon Smith was married to his wife of almost 60 years, the former Jean Studiman. He had sons, Paul and John, and a daughter, Linda, and their spouses. He was the grandfather of 12 and the great-grandfather of five. As his son John put it, “Whether it was radio, politics or working as a justice of the peace, he loved working with people.”

I know the sympathies of the House go out to the Smith family. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I’d like to thank the members for their remarks and assure the family of all of our condolences and sympathies. I will see that the Hansard of these remarks is forwarded to the family.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### LAYOFFS

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, in responding to the unprecedented 3,660 job losses in Ontario announced this



morning by General Motors, you said that Ontarians can take "some consolation" in the losses, as Ontario can withstand the cuts. You also referred to it as "a little bit of contraction."

Families in Oshawa and St. Catharines are staring at an uncertain future with the loss of significant numbers of paycheques for those communities, and communities that are already dealing with literally thousands of layoffs announced in this sector this year alone will suffer more body blows. I'm not sure how much consolation they can take from any of that, and I'm not sure they would describe this as "a little bit of contraction."

I'm not sure if that was your entire answer to these communities or to these people this morning, but I give you the opportunity to tell us what you're going to do specifically in response to this devastating news from General Motors today.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this. It's a very important issue, not just from a broader economic perspective but of course in a very immediate sense to those families that are affected by this.

My understanding is that GM's intention is to ensure that any ensuing layoffs are the result of attrition. There's no way for me to make any magical commitments about how we might somehow bring an end to that process on the part of GM and those cuts.

There is some upside to this, and I'll speak to that in greater detail in the following questions, but I can say that while the plant here contributes 25% of North American output, we are only going to be the subject of 10% of job reductions. That doesn't diminish it, and it was never my intention, I say to the leader of the official opposition, to somehow minimize or diminish the importance of this issue to those families that are affected.

**Mr. Tory:** Premier, you were quoted in a November 9 story in the *Toronto Star* as acknowledging 40,000 job losses in manufacturing since you took office. You've also said that Ontarians should expect some "painful" times ahead, to use your words. You made this statement as well: "It's our job as government to find a way to strengthen people so they can find security, not so much in a job, but in employability."

Premier, what exactly does that mean for the 3,660 men and women who will lose their jobs in Oshawa and St. Catharines, as well as the 1,100 families affected by Ford's cuts in Windsor and the 500 to 1,000 families that will see no paycheque as a result of the Chrysler cuts in Brampton, Etobicoke and Windsor? Specifically, what are you going to do for this group of men and women, these thousands of people affected by these layoffs, to give these people, to use your words, "security in employability"? Specifically, what are you going to do?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, I think it's really important to keep these particular statistics in some perspective. The fact of the matter is that since we first earned the privilege of serving Ontarians as their government, this Ontario economy, the hard-working people of

Ontario and the entrepreneurs in particular have generated 214,000 net new jobs. I think that's very significant. We have lost some jobs in the manufacturing sector; there's no doubt about that. But I think it's important, as I say, to keep in mind the overall picture.

Something else by way of helpful information, I think: In the month of February 2001, when the Conservatives were in power, 38,000 jobs were lost in that month alone. That was the second-highest single job loss in a month ever in the history of our province. Again, I'm pleased that we have generated 214,000 new jobs, net, since the beginning of our term.

**Mr. Tory:** I'm not sure exactly how the several thousand jobs that I've outlined qualifies as "some jobs" that have been lost. But notwithstanding, Premier, in a *Globe and Mail* story on June 9 of this year, your Minister of Economic Development confirmed that General Motors could cut 4,000 jobs over the next nine years and still receive \$435 million in government funding. I want to quote from the story: "The federal and provincial governments signed the Beacon deal with GM Canada to ensure that job numbers in the auto sector will be maintained."

General Motors already announced between 1,000 and 1,500 layoffs in the latest round of bargaining with the Canadian Auto Workers. Today, they announced that 3,660 jobs would be lost. It would seem that the 4,000 job-layoff maximum cited by your minister has been significantly exceeded already. What are you planning to do, in view of this, to protect the interests of the Ontario taxpayers?

1430

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I am—and I will make no apologies for this—much more optimistic, much more bullish about our economy than is the leader of the official opposition. Let's be specific here: On the auto sector alone, in our first two years-plus on the job, we have secured \$4.5 billion worth of new investment. For the first time since the invention of the car, we're the number one auto producer in North America. So I will not tolerate any notion that somehow we are backsliding when it comes to the auto sector in the province of Ontario. We're at the highest point in our history when it comes to securing a strong economic advantage on the auto score.

I am also pleased to say that when it comes to the Beacon project, something that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Joe Cordiano, worked very hard on, that is going full-steam ahead. That's a \$2.5-billion investment project that's going to see 1,000 new jobs. In addition, GM announced an additional \$400-million investment in the Oshawa and St. Catharines plants just last week. In St. Catharines alone, that means 150 new jobs.

#### VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm sure the people who are losing their jobs will take great comfort from all that.



My question is for the Premier. Yesterday I visited the West Albion Seventh-day Adventist Church, the scene of Friday's funeral shooting, the 48th gun death in Toronto so far this year. I'm sure I speak for all members in conveying our sense of grief for the families, for the congregation of that church, for the community, for the black community and for our city.

I saw the bullet holes in the church windows and the marks on the ground where the victim was gunned down, and it was easy to see that this whole thing had reached a new and even more unacceptable stage. My question to the Premier is, what additional actions and measures do you propose to take, and what leadership do you intend to show in light of this thing reaching a new and even more unacceptable stage? What are you going to do?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** Let me take this opportunity to express on behalf of not just our party, not just our government, but indeed on behalf of all Ontarians our terrible concern connected with this endless string of tragedies affecting not only the lives of the young people involved and their potential, but their families, their friends and their communities.

I know that our police are working as hard as they can on this to try to grapple with it. I just got off the phone with Chief Blair; I had another conversation with him in that regard. I know that our courts are working as well. I just got off the phone with Chief Justice Lennox. What I've asked is that they meet with me. I've asked Chief Blair to come in; I've asked Chief Justice Lennox or his designate. I've spoken with the Attorney General about this. I know that many of us are doing much, but I think there are other things we might do, and by exploring that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tory:** I'm happy to hear that these meetings are proposed to take place, because the people in these communities told me throughout the summer, and told me again yesterday, that they're looking for leadership from their elected leaders, through their words, through meetings, but even more importantly, of course, through actions. They need you, as the leader of this province, to speak up and speak out on these issues. I think they're looking for a greater sense of urgency from their governments, including the government of Ontario.

The police and the people in these communities tell me—they've told me over and over again, as recently as yesterday—that they need more information from more people who are willing to come forward in respect of these crimes. Back in October, your minister made a very general announcement about helping victims and witnesses, assigning staff and so on. Can you tell us specifically what actions have been taken since that time a few weeks ago? What staff have been assigned, when and where? Can you tell us that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the Attorney General.

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General):** I'm assuming that the leader of the official opposition is

speaking not only to the announcement with respect to the expansion of the guns and gangs task force but also with respect to the witness protection program. I can tell you that the announcement on the expansion of the guns and gangs task force, which took place approximately three weeks ago, saw 26 additional police officers and 32 additional crowns being added to the task force. As of today, 24 of those 32 crowns are at their desks, at work on the guns and gangs task force, and we anticipate that by the end of the month the full complement will be in place. That is going to mean a very, very big difference, and amount to an unprecedented effort in terms of law enforcement collaborating and working together like never before to deal with the horrible, horrible guns and—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tory:** I'm sorry to say this, but that answer was just not responsive to what I asked about, which was the assistance being given, as you said you would do, to people so they could come forward and feel comfort in coming forward and being protected. The answer is utterly unresponsive. It's so frustrating.

I'll direct this question to the Premier again, because this relates to a meeting he had. I think, with respect, we have to do better than this and we have to not only raise this issue, but appear to raise it on your priority list. Person after person commented yesterday on the fact that people are not coming forward with information with respect to these cases. One thing that representatives of the community recommended in a meeting they had with you was the creation of a neighbourhood intervention unit, a community intervention unit, a kind of Crime Stoppers run by the community itself, so people could feel comfortable phoning their information in and knowing that it would be handled, not by the police or by somebody close to the police, which they think Crime Stoppers is, but by people in the community.

In view of the need for help, in view of the need for people to come forward, can you tell us, are you willing to give this idea a try? What thought have you given to it since those people were in your office telling you they thought this would help a great deal?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** Absolutely. We are moving forward on that, but I think it's important to know that we do have, right now, a tip line set up. Crime Stoppers has a tip line set up. You can call in to that number and you do not have to provide identification; you can be anonymous. If you can provide a tip that leads to an illegal handgun being taken off the street, then there are rewards for that.

I'm disappointed to say that when this proposal was put forward and when I and Chief Blair and Minister Kwinter helped launch this particular proposal for the tips line, it met with nothing but criticism from the official opposition—nothing but criticism. I say, let's work together on these initiatives that can make a difference and, as the leader of the official opposition often says but never does, let's put politics aside and work together to try to make our streets safer.



**The Speaker:** New question. The leader of the third party.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** Premier, on Friday at a west-end Toronto church where people had gathered to mourn the shooting death of 17-year-old Jamal Hemmings, 18-year-old Amon Beckles was shot down.

Premier, in the name of Toronto's 17 murder victims so far this year, their families and all who live in fear, when is the McGuinty government going to address Toronto's gun violence with the urgency it deserves?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The leader of the NDP will know that not only has our government been very active in this area, working hard to address both the crime itself and the causes of the crime, but so has the federal government, I would argue, particularly in recent days. Our Toronto police are working actively; our courts are working as hard as they can as well.

To remind the leader of the NDP of some of the progress that we have made with respect to attacking these issues, he will know about our guns and gangs task force. He will know that we have in place 34 new judges, 50 new crown attorneys, 55 more probation officers. He will know that we are seeking tougher penalties in the Criminal Code. He will know that we are the first jurisdiction in North America to enshrine mandatory gunshot wound reporting legislation. He will know that we have brought in new tools for prosecutors; we're working hard to improve the witness protection program; we're blitzing gun businesses, and we've launched a gun amnesty program, to list—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, in August, when you last addressed this issue, you said, "The overwhelming majority of residents in the community are peace-loving, hospitable, warm, engaging people." Since your engagement at that time, 25 more young people have been shot down. Our streets, our neighbourhoods and our communities are losing young people at an incredible rate to gun violence. Yes, you've made a lot of announcements, but when you talk to people out there in the community, they're very clear: None of it is effective. None of it is stopping the gun violence. I ask you, Premier, when are you going to treat the issue of gun violence in Toronto with the urgency it deserves?

1440

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** In addition to those initiatives that I just listed, which I happen to believe are important and which I happen to believe are making a positive difference, we've also funded pre-apprenticeship pilot projects for high-risk youth, we've helped fund a summer jobs program with the city of Toronto targeting youth from high-risk neighbourhoods, and we're bringing in new legislation making it mandatory to continue to learn until the age of 18.

To repeat something I said earlier—I know the leader of the NDP is going to want to be very supportive of this—I know that the federal government has been working hard on this issue, as has our government, as has

our police, as has Mayor Miller, and the judges and the court system as a whole. But I think there might be a few things that we have overlooked. Hence, I have asked representatives of those areas if they might not meet with me so that we might compare our initiatives and see what it is that we might better do together to address this very pressing and very urgent issue.

**Mr. Hampton:** I've met with representatives from many of these neighbourhoods. I've met with a lot of youth from these communities. You know what they say about your pilot projects? "Pilot projects are not the answer. What is needed are across-the-board strategies, not pilot projects that end after six months." You talk about youth employment this summer. A couple of hundred young people employed this summer is not the answer when we're talking about thousands of young people who can't find a place in the real-world economy.

This is what Sandra Carnegie-Douglas of the Coalition of African Canadian Organizations says: "This is devastating. Lives are being completely eliminated.

"We've made the point over and over about the rate at which our young men are dying, but the response from the government shows they are not taking it seriously."

Premier, the time for photo ops is over. What is your action plan for the people who are being shot—

**The Speaker:** Premier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Just so we're clear, when I met with the East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club, I did so without giving notice to the media. When I met with Operation Springboard, I did so without giving notice to the media. When I met with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, I did so without giving notice to the media. When I met with the Jamaican Canadian Association, I think notice was given to the media, but not by me, and I did not speak to the media after that.

We have, in fact, been working very hard, in a very determined and very sincere fashion. This is a very, very urgent and pressing issue. We had yet another horrific example, a shooting just outside a funeral service at a church. I don't think there's anybody left in the province of Ontario who has not been affected by this seemingly endless string of shootings in some kind of a profound way. I think the next best step for us to take at this point in time, given the sincere efforts made by various levels of government, and in particular by our police, is to bring the parties together and explore what it is we might better do by working together than we have been individually.

## LAYOFFS

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** Premier, today General Motors has announced that it's cutting 3,600 jobs: It will eliminate a shift at Ontario's car plant 1 and shut down car plant 2 entirely. To put this in perspective, General Motors is eliminating one out of every five GM jobs in Ontario. What is your government's plan to address what is obviously a very serious loss for Ontario's economy and a most-serious-of-all loss to people who work in Oshawa and St. Catharines?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Let's put this in some perspective. The fact is, there are 30,000 job cuts being announced across the entire continent, and at the end of the day, what GM has made clear is that these layoffs will be through attrition and early retirement. As a result, the impact on individuals will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

The reality is that GM has been facing an enormous challenge for months now as a result of the restructuring that's taking place in the auto sector worldwide. We are not immune to that. We have, with the Beacon project, a \$2.5-billion investment that GM is making in Ontario to make certain that Ontario is going to be at the forefront when it comes to auto production on this continent.

**Mr. Hampton:** The minister talks about perspective. Let's put this in perspective. GM doesn't manufacture cars in Quebec or Nova Scotia or Manitoba or Alberta; they manufacture them in Ontario, and all the job losses are happening in Ontario.

Let's put this in perspective. This is on top of 42,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs that have already been lost under the McGuinty government.

Let's put this in perspective. Every time you lose one of those auto assembly jobs, the multiplier says you lose seven more as it ripples through the economy. That translates into 25,000 jobs.

I have asked you a very serious question on behalf of all those workers and those families who will have no idea now how they will pay the bills and what will happen to them. What is the McGuinty government's plan for a loss of jobs in Ontario that is obviously very serious?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** As I said, there are going to be losses or layoffs through attrition and early retirement. This does not impact the individuals who have jobs and will continue to have jobs at GM.

Let's also recognize that the \$2.5-billion investment is very important to Ontario's economy. It's going to give Ontario's economy a big boost, and \$2.5 billion shouldn't be overlooked as a significant investment made in this province.

I would remind the member that when they were in government, during their entire term, they lost a total of 74,000 net jobs. There were 500,000 people out of work. You were losing 1,500 people, in terms of jobs, a month. That's a record that you should not stand up and have any pride in.

**Mr. Hampton:** The McGuinty government, I swear, one of these days is going to go back to the Great Depression to try to find somebody to blame.

Look, here's the reality, Minister. Some 4,000 people—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock.

Leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** Here's the reality: Close to 4,000 people are going to be out of work. And don't tell us that this is all going to be by attrition. You are not going to reduce 4,000 jobs in Oshawa by simply saying, "Here, you take retirement." This means people are going to be laid off.

But there's something else happening here. You were quick to trumpet contributing \$235 million of Ontario's money to General Motors. Here's the reality for those workers today: General Motors has \$235 million of Ontario's money. What about the 4,000 jobs, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** I would like to know what the leader of the third party is suggesting—that somehow we not have made that investment and given up on the \$2.5-billion investment?

Furthermore, I would add that with respect to the \$235-million investment that this province is making, those dollars will only be paid out after the investments are made. That hasn't happened yet; no dollars have been paid out.

I would add that when the NDP was in government, in February 1991, 50,000 jobs were lost in that month alone.

What are we doing? We are creating a positive, growing economy with an unemployment rate of 6.4% and 214,000 new jobs. That's my answer to the member. New jobs are being created. This economy is moving forward.

1450

## VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, I'd like to come back to the issue of crime. You've indicated, in your answers earlier on today—and I should say, by the way, that I've had a long list of meetings without the media as well. What's helpful about those is that people speak to you very candidly in terms of the things they think need to be done in the community to help with this problem. I'm delighted as well to hear that you have the community leaders coming in again—that's a good thing—but you had them in earlier this year and they told you specifically something that I asked you about and you referred to the Attorney General earlier on. They told you something that would be very important: to set up this community intervention unit, which would help people to feel comfortable coming forward and sharing with their own community members information that will help track down a lot of these crimes that haven't been solved.

Since they had that meeting with you, probably another dozen have lost their lives in these crimes. I'm asking you this: Will you stand up today, based on the last meeting they had with you, and say you're willing to give this idea a try? Because that's what they told you they thought would be helpful to get the police on top of this.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** It may very well have been



that that idea was raised at a particular meeting. I cannot recollect it. Minister Chambers, who was with me, cannot recall that being raised either, but I don't think that's really the issue here. This is yet another idea. It could very well be a very good idea, and we're prepared to consider that and any others. But the purpose of bringing together the stakeholders and the leaders in the justice system is to explore those and other possibilities so that we can do a better job collectively of addressing this terrible issue.

**Mr. Tory:** One of the things that people said yesterday, and they've said it all summer, is the incredible frustration they feel at the fact that governments don't appear to work together and that people don't appear to put politics aside, to use the expression that was used earlier. I wonder, in an effort to make these meetings more effective, to address the concerns articulated by people in these communities about governments not working together and politics playing too big a part in all this, whether the Premier would consider, in the meetings that he's convening, inviting a representative of both of the opposition parties and, at the same time, perhaps having someone from the other levels of government, namely the city of Toronto and the government of Canada, come to that meeting so that maybe for once we can all sit in the room, we can all listen to what people from the community have to say and we can all perhaps even decide together to do something about this problem that is starting to overcome our city. Will you consider that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I have a different kind of meeting in mind, so I'm not prepared to endorse that particular proposal—certainly not at this time. I have a different kind of meeting in mind. It is very specific and very focused and it's action oriented. It has to do with what it is we can and should be doing together when it comes to maximizing the enforcement of the law. That's what I'm talking about right now. We've got some great ideas that we've initiated, more that we have yet to announce with respect to attacking the causes of crime, but right now we want to attack crime harder and faster. So the purpose of bringing in a representative of the judges, a representative of the police and a representative of the crown attorney is to find out what we can do together to attack crime faster and harder. That's the purpose of this meeting. It is very specific and it is action oriented.

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to the Minister of Health. Minister, hospitals and doctors alike are frustrated by your government's e-health initiative. The chief information officer at William Osler says that many hospitals are now pursuing their own technology agenda because of a lack of a clear plan from the government and a breakdown in communications with Smart Systems. She says that there has been a lot of staff hired for the project but no deliverables, and it's

very discouraging to see money going into this hole with no results. There's been little transparency and accountability, negative responses to freedom of information requests, and an overall sense that it's "largely a mystery" as to where the money has been spent.

Minister, how has this project become such a mess?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm the first to acknowledge that we can and will do better with Smart Systems for Health, but I do find that it's very easy, it seems, for people in health care, like the person that you've quoted, to make a swath of comments that are truly negative but without regard for reality.

Just as one example, a long-awaited project that Smart Systems for Health has been involved in helping to implement which is coming to life in Ontario hospital emergency rooms today and on other days across the breadth of our province gives emergency room physicians the capacity of checking Ontario drug benefit records to determine what drug use is there. This is an important part of helping to deal with medication-use errors, particularly related to our seniors.

This is a project that Smart Systems for Health has delivered over the course of the last few months. We will be moving forward soon with significant alterations to the governance strategy as it relates to Smart Systems for Health, but there is a long list of deliverables that they have delivered on, demonstrating good value, but with more work to be done.

**Ms. Martel:** To put it in perspective, the project is a year behind schedule, some \$260 million has already been spent, and there's still no electronic patient record in hospitals, emergency rooms or clinics. From my perspective, this project makes Andersen/Accenture look good.

The prevailing view about the project, and the minister knows this, is that there has been little accountability, little transparency, little direction from your government, a whole lot of staff being hired, and a whole lot of money being spent with very little having been produced.

Minister, in light of the significant amount of money that has been spent so far with very little being produced, are you prepared to refer the matter to the Auditor General so he can get to the bottom of it and try and sort out what should happen next?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I have no position on the issue of the involvement of the Auditor General. Suffice it to say, the Auditor General enjoys sufficient powers that, if this is an area that they wish to be involved in, that poses no challenge and we'll be very supportive.

I just want to say that, while acknowledging there's more that can be done and acknowledging that we're moving forward with governance changes at Smart Systems, I think it's important that we not get too sucked into the use of a blanket statement, wiping out the value of projects that have gone on there.

One other additional example: the integrated public health information system. A key finding related to our SARS challenge was the inability through good systems

to track what was going on in terms of cases. We've been working hard, and Smart Systems has been the lead in developing the integrated public health software, which is in the midst of being installed in public health units across the province of Ontario; one more example of good investment which is offering good protection for Ontarians.

### STUDENT SAFETY

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** My question is to the Minister of Education. As a former teacher, a parent and now as a representative of the people of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, I am acutely aware of the importance our school system plays in the lives of our youth. The skills and lessons they learn within these educational institutions are ones that will serve them later in life when the care of this province falls to them.

It is a sad fact of today's reality, however, that some of the experiences our students are exposed to are negative. Certainly among the worst of these harmful experiences is bullying. Victims are forced to live in a state of fear that can affect their self-confidence and the way they integrate with their peers and family. The bullies, if not taught that their actions are intolerable in our society, come to believe that intimidation and violence are acceptable.

Minister, you recently announced that it will be mandatory for all schools in Ontario to have an anti-bullying program, for which I commend you. Can you tell us how this will benefit our students?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I appreciate the question from the member opposite, who I know, having toured schools with him, is very well aware of this insidious part of human nature, some people would say. What we are saying with our cross-provincial initiative is that it's an unacceptable part of human nature. What students who are affected by bullying can expect is the commitment of this government to stamp out bullying, to make it a certainty that the victims will get help, that perpetrators will know that it is not acceptable and they'll be confronted in terms of where it takes place.

I also want to speak to the rest of us. Whether it's the students who are standing by in school or the rest of us who feel we're not affected, it is, simply put, an attitude that has to change. Six times out of 10, a bystander can intervene and end the bullying within 10 seconds, but too often they don't. In 20% of the cases, there are students aiding the bullying. That is something that we are going to put an end to with effective anti-bullying programs in every single school across the province.

**Mr. Brownell:** The repercussions of bullying are severe, they are real and they must be addressed. It gives me great pride to be part of a government that is doing so in a manner that is both effective and sensitive to the concerns of the youth involved. No matter how many programs we create, however, the opportunities for

bullying persist. With the Internet, phones and time spent away from school, it is unfortunately true that, even if curbed, forms of bullying will continue. As such, it is vital to provide assistance and support to those youth who are victimized by bullying and to let them know that they are not alone.

Minister, could you tell us what actions this government is taking to ensure that victimized youth have access to the support services they need?

1500

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** I want to first say that there's a tremendous amount of effort being made by principals, by school staff and by certain community agencies to try and bring help. What we're trying to do is make sure that that is there for every student who is victimized.

For example, we have a program at Kids Help Phone that will make telephone and e-mail counselling available to every single student who is affected, so that no longer will they be in isolation, because that is the second victimization, where people feel afraid to report to their parents and to others whom we really would appreciate they would trust. But under certain circumstances, if we could turn our minds to it, I think we can understand it doesn't happen. This counselling service will help them to do that. We also will train safe school action teams, including other students, but with teachers and principals in every school across the province.

And this will not happen overnight. This is the beginning, the start of a very concerted effort to change the attitude, so that the very idea that somehow you have to feel bad for having this perpetuated against you will end. I invite—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

### GRIDLOCK

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, I was both surprised and disappointed when I heard last Thursday that you attended a Liberal fundraiser in Hamilton. Now, there's nothing unusual about a Liberal fundraiser in Hamilton. What is unusual is that you went there by plane. You flew from Toronto to Hamilton, a distance of less than 70 kilometres.

There are tens of thousands of people, including myself, who commute each day to work and deal with gridlock. They don't have the luxury of flying to where their next meeting is, or, in your case, where their next dinner party is. You may be thinking it's OK to catch a jet to Hamilton, but clearly the evidence is that you just don't get it.

Premier, are you willing to get your head out of the clouds and work toward gridlock solutions that ordinary Canadians and Ontarians can understand? I call on you to recount and to show leadership on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Transportation.



**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** Let me first correct the member. The plane was chartered by the Liberal Party and paid for by the Liberal Party.

Let me address the most important question, which is the congestion. I know the member was at a press conference this morning with the Toronto Board of Trade and the other area board of trade members. We do realize that we need to address the issue of congestion. Our government is absolutely committed to doing that. We made that very clear in our budget; we made that very clear in our throne speech. We know that we need to come up with a seamless, integrated travel system in this province, and we are going to move ahead with that.

**Mr. O'Toole:** My supplementary is also to the Premier. The idea that you flipped the response to the Minister of Transportation clearly demonstrates that you don't get the seriousness of this issue, and indeed the lack of leadership on this issue. The issue here is the issue of gridlock. You're trying to trivialize this by saying that there's one rule for the Premier and another rule for the peons of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I need to be able to hear the member for Durham. This is entertaining, but not very useful.

The member for Durham.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Under this government, we have sky-high taxes, we have sky-high energy costs, and now we have sky-high solutions to gridlock, especially when you consider the economics and the importance of gridlock to the economy of Ontario. I can tell you that this morning there was a press conference held by the Toronto Board of Trade, and it was attended by all of the GTA chambers of commerce and boards of trade. They were all calling on your government to have a solution to the problem of gridlock. Premier, are you listening to the issue here? And your shenanigans using the airplane to get to Hamilton, Premier—

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let's just look at the track record first. In this morning's press conference, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce representative said this: "We have been asking governments for five to six years to address the problem of gridlock." We have been in power for only two years, so for four years they have been asking the other government to do something about it and they didn't do anything about it.

Let me tell you what we did. We are making a record investment of \$900 million in transit and \$1.2 billion in our highways. We are moving ahead with our fair tax structure. Those are the right steps to take to address some of the congestion problems in this province. I also want to assure the member that we will move ahead with the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority as well.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is to the health minister. The Coalition of Ontario Physicians

in Emergency is filing a formal complaint with Ontario's Ombudsman regarding the failure of your government to provide timely access to emergency care. They'll use four recent examples: where two patients died, one after going home without being seen, the other while waiting for a surgery bed in a teaching hospital; two others who suffered heart attacks and survived, one now on life support, and the other who suffered much greater damage as a result of the wait.

Minister, the coalition says that these patients suffered needlessly and even died because the wait in emergency was too long. Where is your plan to ensure timely access to care in emergency?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I did note those stories, of course. I think it's important in our province, where we have things like coroners who are in the position to help to determine the effects of these things, that those conclusions be the ones that we rely upon. Obviously, a long-standing problem that we've had in the province of Ontario, going back over decades, really, has been the challenge of being able, at all times, to meet our own expectations in terms of timely care in hospital emergency rooms. Previous governments have poured hundreds of millions of dollars directly into that solution and it did not go away.

Accordingly, I think the answer is to be found in a comprehensive range of activities. We've undertaken the most significant one, which is to address the flow of people to hospital emergency rooms in the very first place, so as to leave our acute care hospitals in a situation where their burden, if you will, is limited to the provision of care for those who can only receive care in an acute care environment. Our unprecedented level of investment in community care is the most significant of these things, and by way of supplementary, I'll look forward to the opportunity to expand upon those initiatives we've undertaken.

**Ms. Martel:** It's clear, Minister, that neither patients nor doctors are seeing improvements as a result of whatever you've done. Let me quote Dr. Brockway, a spokesman for the coalition, who said the following to the media: "These visible tragedies are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to showing how we are failing in our mandate to provide the emergency care Ontarians deserve." That's what he said about four recent complaints that are now going to be filed with the Ombudsman.

There are 5.2 million Ontarians who access hospital emergency departments every year, but your wait-time strategy doesn't focus on the chaos in emergency at all. Many people who come to emergency are seriously ill, and they need timely care. The four cases the coalition plans to raise are proof of that. Minister, patients and doctors have seen no changes in timely care in emergency. When will this become a priority for your government?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** A couple of points are very, very important here. Firstly, the honourable mem-

ber, as she's wont to do, has leapt to the conclusion that words offered are a pronouncement that must be accepted with blind faith. All I would say to the honourable member is I don't believe that there's an investigation of the circumstances related to those individual cases that warrants the conclusion that has been drawn and advanced by her.

Secondly, I'm not sure if I'm right on this, because I'm going from memory, but I believe Dr. Brockway may be a physician at Credit Valley Hospital. Credit Valley Hospital is an example of a hospital where, notwithstanding the tremendous growth going on in the neighbourhood, the emergency room visits have stagnated, which is unprecedented in an area of growth. This reflects, I believe, some progress on the investments that we've been making at the community level, to provide care to people in environments other than hospital rooms.

The third point is this: Orphan patients in Ontario have done the DNA test, and they have found that the roots of that look an awful lot like that party and that party.

1510

#### PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Health. I read in the paper on the weekend about a report from the Ontario Medical Association. It raised a problem that we know well; that is, the issue of the doctor shortage in Ontario. I was surprised at this report because I know our government has been very proactive and has taken many steps to reverse the trend we saw develop under the two previous governments. As just one recent example, last Thursday our government announced that we're expanding the number of family medicine training positions by 70%. One of the recipients of our government's investment is Western's Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry in my riding of London North Centre. It will receive \$1 million in capital funding to expand those spots for family doctors.

Minister, can you tell me more about the effect of this increase on my constituents and across the province?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The first thing that needs to be said is the most essential point, which is that we're in a situation in our province where in two years as a government we've been able to create enough interest again in comprehensive family practice that there's more demand on family residency spots. Accordingly, our government is moving forward an increase by next year of 141 new family residency spots. That means an additional 337 family physicians in our province by 2008, a 70% increase. That's good news for communities all around our province.

At Western, 25 new positions will be created by 2006, which means that by 2008 we will have created 63 more family doctors ready to serve Ontario patients. The important part for Western and for all the other medical schools that are participating is that we know that

wherever doctors are given the opportunity to study and do clinical placement, they're much more likely to serve there. Accordingly, our distributed method is very likely good news for communities all across Ontario and most particularly, in this case, London.

**Ms. Matthews:** This kind of tangible commitment to family medicine is long-awaited news. I know this will have an effect on the supply of doctors for my constituents and across the province.

I know that our government is moving forward with urgency to increase access to primary care. It's widely recognized that the NDP created the problem when they reduced medical school spaces in 1993, and the Tory government sat on their hands for five years before they did anything about it. I know the Tory government made lots of promises about increasing access, but they were just promises. They didn't deliver on them.

I'd like you, please, to outline for me our government's plan to increase primary care access for those who have gone without this care for far too long.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** One thing that's very important—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** If I could just ask you two to hold off for a second. Thanks.

One thing that I think is important—

*Interjection*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Sandra, please. That's something I might do.

I think it's important to note that one of the architects of that report, Dr. Josh Tepper, is now the assistant deputy minister of health human resources in our ministry. He will bring additional strategy and energy to initiatives that are already undertaken: increasing undergraduate spaces by 15%, more than doubling the opportunities for international medical graduates, a new deal with the Ontario Medical Association that puts a lot of money into important areas related to family practice, 69 new family health teams coming to life in Ontario, 39 new community health centres and satellites, in addition to the \$21-million investment and 10 satellites last year.

The point is that all these things taken together are good news for patients in Ontario, who, as orphans, know two daddies, and accordingly will begin to see the McGuinty government—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. As you're well aware, the General Motors plants in Oshawa are second to none. Whether it's productivity or quality, J. D. Power and Associates listed Oshawa as number one in North America and the world. I know you know that, Minister, because you were there. One of the key problems, aside from operational costs, whether it's electricity or costs to transport goods, is equal market share access.



Minister, you just returned from a foreign trade mission. What are you doing in Ontario to protect Ontario's goods? They're not allowed to be sold in other countries, yet those countries are allowed to sell their goods in our country.

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I want to thank the member for his praise of the GM deal when it was announced. I think he would still agree with me that this was a very important investment made on the part of GM in Ontario.

I would suggest to the member that the matters he's referring to obviously deal with federal jurisdiction with respect to agreements that are made with other countries. I have recently expressed my concern with respect to a free trade agreement that is being contemplated with South Korea by the federal government, focused on what impacts there might be on the auto sector with regard to free trade agreements. I would say to the member that the federal government is fully apprised of that position.

**Mr. Ouellette:** Minister, it has to be a little bit more than just expressing your concerns. This is one of the key components in the province of Ontario. Without the auto sector, which is the largest employer, we may face some significant impacts as well. I know very well that you're working very hard. South Korea is one of the key areas. What exactly are you doing besides expressing your concern? Have you had any correspondence? What have you come forward with to protect Ontario's interests and Ontario workers?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** Again, I would suggest to the member that in my discussions with the federal trade minister, we've had discussions about this. As well, I have corresponded with my counterpart federally to express Ontario's position, laying out fully the fact that we want to make certain that any agreements that are being signed with any other country ensure that we're not adversely affected or impacted when it comes to the auto sector.

#### CASINO TAXATION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** My question is to the Acting Premier. You'll know that in 1996 the Harris government, without consultation, imposed a 20% win tax on gross revenues from Casino Rama. This is money that should have rightfully gone to First Nations to assist those communities to do what is necessary to function. We figure that, including the interest, the win tax has stripped away almost \$1 billion and climbing from First Nations as we speak. Your government made a commitment to create a new relationship with First Nations in this province, yet you've maintained the win tax and you're tying up First Nations in a process that will end up pushing them into court. I'm asking you today in this House, will you do the right thing and return the money that rightfully belongs to First Nations that has been stripped away by the win tax to First Nations, which need the money?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** In my role as minister for aboriginal affairs, I would like to say to the member, as the member knows, that this government six months ago appointed former Premier David Peterson to be a negotiator in this particular area. As you know, it's a very contentious area and we thought he would have the experience in this. He's been working on this with the First Nations communities and organizations that are involved in this and he's making very good progress.

**Mr. Bisson:** I'm not sure what's contentious. What's contentious is that money has been taken away from First Nations and they could have used that money to do things in their communities that are necessary. Communities like Marten Falls, Pikangikum and others that need services in their communities are not able to do so because they don't have the money. So I don't know what's contentious.

You can do the right thing. You can say today in this House that you're prepared to say to First Nations across this province that you'll return almost \$1 billion plus court costs to First Nations so they can do what's right. I ask you the question: Will you drop this and will you give the money that's rightfully owed to the First Nations directly?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** We have perfect confidence that former Premier David Peterson is the right person to carry out these discussions and negotiations with Ontario First Nations when it comes to these revenues, and we expect a report from him shortly.

1520

#### ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Minister of Culture. At the beginning of the month, seven remarkable Ontario not-for-profit organizations, one of which was in my community of Thunder Bay, were honoured for the difference they've made in their communities thanks to the grants they received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. What can you tell us about the awards that were presented at the Great Grants Awards 2005?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** The Ontario Trillium Foundation receives annually \$100 million of government funding, generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation Great Grants Awards recognize the true leadership of community organizations. The grants remove barriers to employment and education, help Ontarians to be healthy, and improve the prospects of Ontarians of all backgrounds. The results of these grants greatly exceed our government's financial investment. These organizations contribute to our quality of life.

Four awards were presented to grantees in the foundation community program who demonstrated significant impact in four funding sectors. To be considered for any of these awards, eligibility was limited to foundation grant recipients who have completed at least one full year of their grant and whose grant was approved in or after 2002. All of the nominated grants demonstrate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Mauro:** Thank you, Minister. One of the integral components of the grant process, as we all know, are the grant review teams that exist in all of our communities. One of the people in Thunder Bay I'd like to acknowledge is Lorne Allard. Lorne is a long-standing community volunteer, a former city councillor I had the privilege of serving with on city council, and now a member of the grant review team there. These people do tremendous work on a voluntary basis.

I'm also pleased to repeat that the winner in the sports and recreation category is Thunder Bay's Lakehead Canoe Club. Please tell us what distinguished the Lakehead Canoe Club from the other finalists.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I wanted to congratulate this organization. Dragon boat racing is one of the fastest-growing water sports in the world today. Since acquiring four dragon boats in January 2004, Thunder Bay's Lakehead Canoe Club has seen a dramatic increase in participation from local and regional youth and adults. The dragon boat races attracted an impressive 3,300 regional paddlers, and they were cheered on by more than 27,000 spectators. The club makes its dragon boats available to other communities in an effort to build a strong northwestern Ontario competitive force at the national level.

In 2003, the club received \$75,000 over one year from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to purchase the necessary equipment for racing and to enhance fundraising. So I wanted to congratulate the—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. In your first budget about a year and a half ago, you brought in the largest tax increase in Ontario's history. You must know that you cannot do that without serious economic repercussions down the road.

Tax policy and implementation have lag times of a year and a half to two years. Mr. Minister, that time has arrived and you are now seeing the harvest of the tax increases your government sowed. Ontario manufacturers need relief from your tax increases if they are to survive. Will you provide Ontario manufacturers with the relief they so desperately need?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Let me remind the member that since this government has been in office, the Ontario economy has created 214,000 net new jobs. The unem-

ployment rate was at 6.4% in October. That's the lowest rate since 2001 and below the national average of 6.6%.

Let me just say about our manufacturers that in fact they have been facing certain challenges with respect to the economic situation. A lot of what they're facing is a higher dollar that has resulted in exports becoming more expensive when they're shipped, for example, to our largest trading partner, the United States.

What is impressive about what has happened is that our manufacturers have increased their productivity rates by 5.1%. Under your government, the productivity rate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** We were talking about the lag time here, Minister, and that creates those kinds of economic problems, something that your government is doing nothing about.

I've just sent you a list of some 8,000 jobs: plants from Thunder Bay to Cornwall, Prescott, Windsor, Burlington, Elmira; plants all over Ontario that are closing or laying off jobs for the first time in their history, such as Sleeman Breweries. They've never had a layoff before, but they're laying them off now.

Minister, the manufacturing sector, the sector in this province that creates long-time jobs, that creates jobs in the service sector, has lost 42,000 jobs in the last year. Your sector, economic development and trade, is in serious trouble. What are you going to do? What plan do you have to create an opportunity for these companies to survive? What are you going to do? Can you blame the Conservative government for that? Can you blame the feds for that? Can you blame the Americans for that? Can you blame the exchange rate for that? Who are you going to blame? And while you're blaming those people, these companies are going out of business.

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** We have no reason to apologize for these bright economic numbers: 214,000 net new jobs created by the Ontario economy. In fact, Canadian manufacturing productivity increased by 5.2%, just to correct myself. Shipments in 2004 totalled \$310 billion, up 54% from 1995—dramatic increases. Ontario's manufacturing employment is second overall in North America, behind only California.

Yes, the manufacturing sector has experienced some challenges, but they're working through those challenges, as evidenced by the fact that there is an increase in investment in machinery and equipment by about 9.1% this year, which means that our manufacturing sector is becoming more productive. That will lead to more exports and that will lead eventually to a greater number of jobs, even in the manufacturing sector.

## VISITOR

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the east members' gallery we have the Portuguese consul to Toronto, the newly arrived Dr. Maria Paiva.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Welcome. That, of course, is not a point of order.



## PETITIONS

1530

SERVICES FOR THE  
DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of my constituents.

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

## PROSTATE CANCER

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, introduced a private member's bill, Bill 4, that amends the Health Insurance Act and seeks to make the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test an insured service under OHIP; and

"Whereas the PSA test is one of the means used to screen for possible prostate cancer, the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canadian men;

"Whereas the PSA test is used as an indicator of the likelihood a man has prostate cancer and can be very helpful in guiding men in deciding whether to continue with further testing; and

"Whereas PSA testing in Ontario is only covered if recommended by a doctor and done in a hospital setting, otherwise costing Ontario men approximately \$25, a fee which could be a deterrent to the underprivileged;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To support Bill Mauro's private member's bill, Bill 4, which makes PSA testing an insured service under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Andrew.

## CORMORANTS

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas cormorant populations in the Great Lakes basin have increased to over 450,000 birds over the past several years, are continuing to grow and are significantly depleting fish populations; and

"Whereas numerous scientific studies have clearly shown the serious negative impact on fish stocks and freshwater habitats; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources continues to study the impact of cormorants and possible management strategies; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources has committed to experimental control of cormorants at specific sites;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Natural Resources to immediately begin to significantly reduce cormorant populations in areas where they are having a demonstrably negative impact on local fisheries through managed culls."

I affix my signature in support.

## GAMMA FOUNDRIES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I would like the Minister of the Environment to take particular note of this petition to the Parliament of Ontario. It's presented by Geoffrey and Dorothy Long of Cascade Circle in Richmond Hill and is signed by hundreds of their neighbours. It reads as follows:

"Whereas all residents in the town of Richmond Hill have the right to enjoy their homes, property, neighbourhood and to breathe clean air; and

"Whereas Gamma Foundries, a division of Victaulic Co. of Canada Ltd., is clearly the identifiable and documented source of noxious fumes and odours in the Newkirk Road area of Richmond Hill; and

"Whereas Gamma Foundries has persistently failed to respond to the legitimate concerns of the community regarding these odours and emissions; and

"Whereas Gamma Foundries has refused to initiate engineering solutions to these issues as identified in a report by Earth Tech and as ordered by the Ministry of the Environment; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has specifically directed Gamma Foundries to initiate engineered controls to address the adverse effects of these pollutants;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of the Environment to take all measures possible to enforce the provincial officer's order ... and to ensure that residents are afforded the right to enjoy their property and neighbourhood as is their right under law."

I affix my signature to this petition.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** I have a petition with respect to persons with intellectual disabilities and those who work with them in the province of Ontario.

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I have signed it as well.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I’m pleased to sign this and present it to Nathan to present to the table.

## CELL PHONES

**Mr. John O’Toole (Durham):** I’m pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

“Whereas the safe operation of a motor vehicle requires the driver’s undivided attention; and

“Whereas research has shown that the operation of devices such as cell phones detracts from a driver’s ability to respond and concentrate on the task at hand; and

“Whereas approximately 40 jurisdictions around the world have already passed legislation to restrict the use of cell phones while driving;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned”—a very long list here as well—“respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario enact legislation to curtail the use of” cell phones “as proposed in the private member’s legislation introduced by” MPP “John O’Toole....”

I’m pleased to support this legislation as a good piece, and I think members will all support it.

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Minister of Culture recently announced that there would be funding cuts totalling more than \$1.2 million from Ontario public library services; and

“Whereas over 69 million people visited public libraries in Ontario in 2003, with more than 100 million items circulating; and

“Whereas these cuts will impact you as a library user, resulting in delays in how often your library receives new books;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Culture restore the cuts to funding for Ontario public library services so that our library can continue to promote literacy in our community.”

I signed that petition, and I want to thank the Collingwood Public Library for sending it to me.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

As I am in agreement, I will sign this petition.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by" others; "and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I affix my name in support.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I've affixed my signature as well.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a petition that was presented to me by Mr. Don Wilkinson of Community Living York South. It contains some 184 signatures. It reads as follows:

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to

receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support of this request.

1540

## STUDENT SAFETY

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has failed to ensure that students are protected from individuals whose past behaviours have directly harmed children; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has chosen to ignore the children's aid society's recommendation that certain individuals not work with children; and

"Whereas the introduction of a 'volunteer' into the school system must not be solely at the discretion of the principal; and

"Whereas the Liberal government promised to ensure that school boards provide strong local accountability and decision-making;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to amend the Education Act to place restrictions on the eligibility of persons who act as volunteers in schools, and to include as a formal requirement that volunteers be subject to the approval of the school board and parent council."

I've signed the petition.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Thank you very much—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Excuse me. The Chair changes its mind. The member for Oxford.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** The petition I have here, signed by a great number of my constituents, is similar to others that have been read, and obviously that's because it's such a great concern for the people in my community. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to

address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I affix my signature, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The time for petitions has expired.

## ROYAL ASSENT

### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 169, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to amend and repeal various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters / Projet de loi 169, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et modifiant et abrogeant diverses autres lois à l'égard de questions relatives au transport.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 14, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 197, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 17, 2005, I'm now required to put the question.

On October 25, 2005, Mr. Duncan moved second reading of Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll call in the members. I remind them that this is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1544 to 1549.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bountrogianni, Marie

Gerretsen, John  
Hoy, Pat  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kennedy, Gerard  
Kular, Kuldeep

Parsons, Ernie  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq

Bradley, James J.  
Brownell, Jim  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Colle, Mike  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Duguid, Brad  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter

Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Mossop, Jennifer F.

Racco, Mario G.  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sorbara, Gregory S.  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wong, Tony C.  
Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those who are opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Flaherty, Jim  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Horwath, Andrea

Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley  
Miller, Norm

Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Wilson, Jim

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 54; the nays are 21.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005

#### SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Mr. Bradley moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 197, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bradley.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, who will now commence the debate.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** I'm pleased to rise today on third reading of Bill 197, the Budget Measures Act. The budget bill covers a wide array of topics, introduced by the minister.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Can we clear the Legislature of those who want to carry on meetings so that the member can proceed?

**Mr. Arthurs:** Thank you, Speaker.

Bill 197 contains a wide array of topic areas of interest to constituents of the province of Ontario. It contains amendments to some 11 different statutes and proposes changes in three others.

There are those who support investment and innovation as part of the overall strategy of the budget bill. We're proposing changes to make this sector even more attractive to investors. One type of investor is those who have put money into labour-sponsored investment funds,



also known as LSIFs. In this bill, we're proposing amendments that would give legislative effect to our plan to phase out the tax credit for these funds by the end of the 2010 taxation year.

When these provincial tax credits were introduced in 1991, the province's venture capital sector was at a much different stage than it is today. Our government has put in place a number of programs to help build and sustain the sector, and thus it was felt appropriate that by 2010, the LSIF tax credits be phased out.

We expect that we will help to build this sector and sustain it in a variety of ways, including:

—The establishment of a new Ministry of Research and Innovation, led by Premier McGuinty. It includes these types of initiatives that will keep the sector strong.

—A new Research Council of Ontario, to help coordinate public research and commercialization opportunities. Certainly, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade has spoken, during this mandate over two years, about strategies on commercialization to bring new ideas to fruition and actually put them in the marketplace.

—As well as promoting Ontario as a research centre. There has been a \$27-million investment in the Ontario research commercialization program proposed in the bill to help public research institutions attract early investment, and a \$36-million Ontario commercialization investment fund to help encourage investment in new technology companies.

We've worked closely with the labour-sponsored investment sector, and have developed a plan that will allow the province to exit this particular involvement from this tax credit in an orderly and responsible fashion. It's not being cut off in this budget year, but clearly there's a strategy through to 2010 to allow the sector to adapt to its new realities, and for the overall investment and research sector to take hold of the opportunities that clearly exist.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn my attention, and yours, if I could, to the elements of the bill that support the Reaching Higher plan as one of the other initiatives. As members will recall, one year ago the McGuinty government took the bold step of introducing the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. In doing that, the provisions of this act—although they apply to the government itself, we believe that its spirit can and should apply to other areas of the public sector.

This bill proposes to make Ontario's universities subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and ensure that Ontario's publicly funded post-secondary institutions are transparent and accountable to the people of Ontario. So as not to jeopardize the work being done at these institutions, the freedom of information provisions would take into account and respect academic freedom and competitiveness. Clearly, we understand the importance of the university post-secondary sector when it comes to doing research and innovative study programs. Thus, we wouldn't want to jeopardize that academic freedom, or the competitive environment that is created accordingly.

The bill also proposes to establish a new arm's-length Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario to take a lead role in supporting quality improvement in post-secondary education.

The 2005 budget recognizes that many Ontarians are choosing to pursue training opportunities at private career colleges. To ensure the quality of vocational programs offered at these colleges and protect student interests, the budget proposes to introduce the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. This legislation would, among other measures, establish a superintendent to oversee such colleges, implement an insurance fund to protect students in the event of a college's bankruptcy, and ensure that only registered, approved colleges can operate in the province of Ontario.

The McGuinty government's second budget makes some key investments in Ontario's priorities, which certainly includes post-secondary education with a historic commitment to \$6.2 billion by 2009-10. This is the largest multi-year investment in over 40 years and a strategic long-term investment in jobs and economic growth in Ontario.

1600

I would like to take the opportunity to address some of the good government measures that the bill has planned. One thing the bill would do is authorize the borrowing of up to \$7.1 billion. This money would be invested in the government's programs, the government's services and other related costs the government finds itself having to deal with. No one, though, should interpret this borrowing provision as anything other than the routine business of the government of the province of Ontario. The fiscal plan, as set out, is on track. We've made great strides and had great success in reducing the deficit we inherited from the Harris-Eves government. Minister Duncan spoke to the plan just a few weeks ago. If I can just draw from his remarks, and I quote, "Ontario's economic foundations are firm and the outlook is positive. Ontario is well positioned to manage the challenges and opportunities ahead, due to its economic diversity and growing, highly educated population." We continue to manage our revenues and expenditures in what can only be referred to as a fiscally responsible manner.

Higher revenues have helped us, with the projection of our deficit being reduced to some \$2.4 billion, an improvement of some \$427 million from the 2005 budget projections this spring. If the \$1-billion reserve that's built into the plan to protect against unexpected and adverse changes to the economic and fiscal outlook is not required, the deficit could further be reduced to some \$1.4 billion. Clearly that would be good news for the people of the province of Ontario, if we're able to achieve that in this fiscal year 2005-06.

The bill also proposes a streamlining of tax remission procedures. Current legislation allows the minister to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor the remission of any tax, fee or penalty when the minister sees it as being in the public interest to do so. Under our proposed changes, the minister himself or herself, as the case might



be at whatever point in time those occur, would have the authority to approve such a remission of \$10,000 or less.

As the minister and other members of the government, including the Premier, have said on many occasions, our plan is working. As a matter of fact, I found it very interesting when the minister spoke a week or so ago in a rather animated fashion. He spoke about what should be up—things like jobs and revenues are up—and he said what should be down, such as the deficit, which clearly is down.

Since we came into office a little more than two years ago, we have seen thousands, tens of thousands, literally hundreds of thousands, of new jobs created. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade this afternoon spoke to the fact that there have been some 214,000 net new jobs added to the economy of the province since we took office. We've seen major companies, such as Toyota, commit significant additional investment into the province of Ontario. The deficit, which stood at some \$5.5 billion in 2003-04, currently stands at \$1.6 billion.

The future is not without risk; that's for sure. I believe the budget—and this particular piece of legislation—does an admirable job of managing those risks and those challenges and preparing Ontario for the success that awaits us all.

I'm certainly proud of the steps our government has taken. I'm pleased and proud in being able to work directly with Minister Duncan and the Ministry of Finance. I'm pleased that, both in this bill and across the board, we're getting help to achieve the success that is so much needed.

There are a number of measures, and I don't want to deal with them all, but I do want to make a few additional comments. I've already mentioned that if the \$1-billion reserve is not required that's been built into the plan, if we don't need it for those unexpected and adverse changes to the economy, the 2005 deficit could possibly be further reduced to some \$1.4 billion. Our very balanced and responsible approach that will eliminate the deficit by no later than 2008 or 2009, or possibly a year earlier if those reserves are not needed, and we remain on track.

Job growth continues, with over 200,000 new jobs introduced into the economy.

But what about the challenges and risks that we find ourselves facing yet? We're optimistic about the future, but it's important to remember that we do have challenges. Certainly high oil prices are an example. We've seen the impact of hurricanes in the Gulf, what they did in the short term. High oil prices are going to continue to challenge us. Speculation that we'll see higher interest rates—we can see the bank rates beginning to move up—will put pressure on our economy. But we're positioned to deal with those, and certainly through the budgetary planning are acknowledging those realities, things like higher oil prices, the strength of the Canadian dollar and, potentially, the higher interest rates.

We plan on continuing to strengthen the economy. We're going to continue to call on the federal govern-

ment to join us in doing that, to join us in a critical partnership to ensure that Ontario remains the engine of economic growth in Canada, as it has been, and to help us narrow the \$23-billion gap between what we are spending on federal programs and what we are receiving back here in Ontario. All parties have supported the government in helping to narrow that gap to a more responsible level, at the same time as recognizing our obligation as the engine of the economy of Canada in ensuring that those who have the greatest need are protected.

We're committed to enhance and strengthen the level of confidence in Ontario's economy here at home, across the continent and, frankly, around the world. Thanks to the Premier, we're working on the gap. More recently, the Premier and a contingent spent some 10 or 11 days in China and I think made a very strong impression. Certainly the local media we saw as a result of that tour encouraged us that we are doing the right things in reaching out to what is one of the largest trading partners in the world and will be one of the largest economic engines that the world has ever seen in the years to come. We need to establish and build relationships with China on an economic front. This is the first foray, as I understand, from our Premier, and the first one in a long time to China. There will be a requirement to do more of those. One has to build those relationships and continue those relationships to have success in doing business in China. It can't be a one-off venture.

One of the issues that we faced recently was higher gas prices. It's something that we need to come back to on occasion so that the public at large recognizes that as gas prices go up, provincial revenues don't go up accordingly. So there is no windfall for us as a result of an increase in gas prices. In fact, what we see often is a decline in usage as prices go up, and, with that decline in usage, a decline in our revenue stream, because our revenues are based on a per-litre sale, not on the value of the commodity. So challenges such as higher gas prices are truly reflected in the revenue stream that we see available to us.

There are a number of initiatives that this budget bill proposes, a number that I've had a chance to mention. We are on track for our economic projections; we're on track for a balanced budget; we're looking at the investment community through things like the labour-sponsored investment fund; we recognize the importance of health; we recognize the importance of post-secondary education in particular through the proposed investments over five years to ensure that we are well positioned for the future in Ontario.

We're not prepared, through this budget or any budget, to try to be all things to all people. I know that the Leader of the Opposition would like us to take \$2.4 billion out of the health care system. He would like us to lower taxes and he would like us to spend more money. Frankly, that's not a possibility. Probably every member of this Legislature would like us to spend more money, have less taxes and be able to get rid of the deficit yesterday, but that's not a political reality for anyone in



this Legislature, so we have to make difficult and hard decisions about how we're going to achieve the end results that we want. This budget helps us to do that in a responsible fashion.

The Tory government that preceded us managed, in spite of telling us they had a balanced budget, to run up effectively a huge deficit, and they did that at a time when revenues were declining. We're not prepared to do that. We're prepared, though, to let people know that we are getting to a real balanced budget. When we get that deficit eliminated, the Auditor General will report on that accordingly and report before the next election on the success we've had in doing that. People will know exactly where they stand in that regard.

I'm looking forward to the conclusion of the debate. If this legislation is passed, allowing us to move on with the complete and full implementation of the Budget Measures Act as proposed under Bill 197, I look forward to our continuing work on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario in a responsible fashion economically, and to building the economy of the province and providing for the key needs of the province both from the standpoint of its health and its education for our generation and the generation that will follow us.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time and the attention of the Legislature.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I listened very intently to the honourable member's defence of this recent budget and I really want to say, having just concluded the estimates—which is, for those who are uninitiated, the annual review of the budgetary process ministry by ministry by ministry. So when you get past the veneer of the government public relations gesture of putting out a budget with its top-line messages as to how they interpret they're going to be improving the economy, below that surface are the really painful details of where the government is cutting in programs and shifting dollars.

It's been well documented, the significant amount of increase the government is putting into advertising at a time when our children's aid societies are carrying over a \$75-million deficit from last year. They're projected to do a further \$60-million to \$70-million accumulated deficit. Children's support services like Erinoak—I had a meeting with them earlier this morning—have in some of their language development programs a 100% increase and yet their budgets have been flatlined by this Liberal government. It's bad enough that they eliminated a very capable minister of children's services and then proceeded to freeze program after program that was in this very promising envelope of responsibility for the government. The list of program cuts is quite enormous, primarily in children's services. If you're not in the educational system and the money is not going to teachers, it's very hard to find where this government is putting money directly into the hands of children and their learning experiences.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments. The member for Beaches—East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hope you can hear me with this horrendous sore throat and cold I have.

I was listening intently to the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge as he rhymed off what he thinks are the important government goals and objectives. Then he came to the sentence that rather puzzles me. He said that all members of this House would like to increase spending, all members of this House would like to reduce taxes and all members of this House would at the same time like to pay down the deficit, but it is simply not possible. It seems self-evident to me that that is not possible. But I have to ask the honourable member, during the last election, is that not exactly what your party promised to do? That is precisely what they promised to do and what they have not delivered in this budget.

You promised that you were going to increase spending in 231 policy areas; you promised that you were going to not raise taxes, if not reduce them; and you promised that you were going to do wonders with the deficit. The reality is that none of those things were possible.

It is refreshing today to hear the member comment that all people want to do it but it's not possible, but I wonder if he would maybe in his own two minutes at the end describe how and when he came to this revelation. It certainly wasn't at the time of the last election; it certainly wasn't at the time of the first budget; but it seems now to have sunk in, in very real terms to him.

I would state that he is talking about a number of areas and policy initiatives that he thinks the government is doing well in, and I hope, when it is my turn to speak, that I can talk to him about some areas where you are not doing so well—areas involving the poor, those on welfare, areas of housing and rent supplements, areas of aboriginal communities and those children who are afflicted with autism. That's really what this debate should be.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London—Fanshawe):** Thank you for giving me this opportunity again to stand up and speak about the budget.

I was listening carefully to the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge when he was talking about and detailing the importance of the budget. I also listened to the members for Burlington and Beaches—East York. I want to say, our budget has a lot of great elements. It draws a vision for the future of this province.

When you go to many different communities—when we go to London, they are really enjoying the government investment in health care, education, colleges and universities, child care spaces, senior citizens' homes, affordable housing. All these elements came about because the government made this second budget that speaks to all these issues.

To speak to the honourable member from Beaches—East York, when he was talking about some negative issues going on in many different Ontario communities, I



agree with him. Do we say we've solved all the problems? No. We still have a lot of problems in front of us that we have to face. We have to work toward eliminating or at least minimizing their effect and try to solve some of those issues, because they need our intervention as soon as possible. But, as he knows, we inherited a big deficit from the past government. We inherited a lot of problems: the chaotic situation in the education system, in health care, in senior citizens' homes, affordable housing and many different issues.

That's why this budget came to speak about these issues, came to put the whole government on the right track in order to solve all these elements: to work to solve the issues of the poor, of affordable housing; to try to fix health care and the education system; to try to invest more money in post-secondary education. We believe the future is about research, about innovation, about creating jobs for many different young people in our communities.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech of the member from Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge. He was talking about debt and the deficit. I would ask, what is the deficit supposed to be this year? The numbers just keep on changing. I've heard \$1.6 billion, \$2.4 billion. I know that, had this government stuck to its original plan, even to the 2004 budget plan, they would have had a surplus this past year. But no, you keep on changing your plans. You keep on making a plan and then changing it—

**Interjection:** Four times.

**Mr. Miller:** Four times. That's four new plans you've made in the last couple of years.

The member from Beaches–East York was talking about the election commitments that were made by this government. Just last week I refreshed myself on some of the 231 election promises that were made by the Liberal Party when they were running in the 2003 election. I recall there was a line in there that the debt would go one way, and that's down. I think that's what it said: one way, down. Well, what has happened? The debt has gone up significantly; in fact, we've seen some massive increases in the debt this government has racked up in the last couple of years. They've done that at a time when they had \$13 billion extra revenue that they weren't counting on having, and yet they've still increased the debt to the taxpayers of this province.

That's the same thing that happened back in 1987 to 1990, when the Peterson Liberal government had an opportunity to balance the budget in the province of Ontario but instead had undisciplined spending and never did balance the budget. We have the forestry and automotive sectors and manufacturing losing 42,000 jobs—some real problems starting out there—and this government can't be disciplined and control their spending so that businesses can do well and the people of this province can prosper.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Whitby–Ajax–Uxbridge has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Arthurs:** I want to thank the members from Burlington, Beaches–East York, London–Fanshawe and Parry Sound–Muskoka for their comments.

Just a couple of things, and let me start where the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka finished, with comments about the deficit and where we stand. We've had stronger growth and higher revenues in 2005, and the deficit is now projected at \$2.4 billion, as opposed to the \$2.8 billion projected earlier this year. It has helped us at mid-year to get to a better projected position.

If the \$1 billion we have set aside in reserve—built into the plan to protect against unexpected conditions—is not required, the deficit could be further reduced to \$1.4 billion. So we're projecting—best case, with not using the reserve—a year-end deficit of \$1.4 billion. That's on track with where we want to be, certainly on track for 2008–09 to have a balanced budget, and ideally earlier, by 2007–08. Certainly strong economic growth and new jobs will help to do that.

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The member from Beaches–East York: I can appreciate his comments, both having come here from the municipal sector. We all know the realities of balancing demands, financial resources and the ability to pay for those. I guess the real comment is, we can't be everything to everyone—none of us can—at any point in time. We can't, as a government, eliminate the deficit in this budget year, increase spending in things like post-secondary education, and eliminate the entire deficit. It just can't all be done at once. We've had to make choices about priorities. Our priorities are in health, in education, in post-secondary education, which are high on our agenda, and it's going to take us a little bit longer, then, to be able to eliminate the deficit that we inherited in its entirety.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the time, and the interjections from the members opposite.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** I am going to split my one-hour lead with my colleagues from Simcoe–Grey and from Lanark–Carleton.

I'm pleased to arise on third reading of Bill 197. I had a chance to address the bill in its totality on second reading. We did not have committee hearings on this. The bill is the same as it was at second reading, so I won't dwell on a number of the details; my remarks will continue to stand.

There are some areas that I did want to highlight over probably about a 10-minute or so address on Bill 197 at third reading. First, I think it's always important, when we're speaking about a finance bill, to look at the overall context of the financial plan. It's really hard to say "financial plan," because in fact there have been a series of varying financial plans brought forward by the McGuinty government. Minister Sorbara, I think, had three or four separate plans where the numbers continued to change dramatically. Now the new finance minister from Windsor, Mr. Duncan, has brought forward his own mark.



I do want to state for the record what is rather surprising about Minister Duncan's debut as finance minister: He has increased the deficit from what was reported at \$1.6 billion last year to \$2.4 billion, if I recall off the top of my head, for the fiscal year 2005-06. This has to be the first finance minister in a long, long time who has taken over the books midway through a term and actually increased the deficit in his first budget. That's regrettable, because there really should be no reason for the deficit to increase under Finance Minister Duncan. I think we all know that revenues are up exorbitantly in the provincial of Ontario, what with Dalton McGuinty's record tax increases on working families and on businesses both small and large; as well, more money that they're clawing in through increased user fees and through hydro rate increases, to name but a couple. It is rather strange and disturbing to see the actual deficit numbers increasing, when some \$13 billion in additional revenue has come into the coffers through Dalton McGuinty's taxing initiatives.

His high-tax policy, though, is met with a higher spending policy. In fact, Dalton McGuinty's tax-and-spend proclivities make Bob Rae and David Peterson blush. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation put out a study recently that indicated Dalton McGuinty's per capita spending has already exceeded those of Bob Rae and David Peterson, former poster children of runaway spending. Of course, those are measured in constant dollars. So the \$13 billion in additional revenues squeezed from hardworking taxpayers and from businesses has been spent, and then some, meaning the deficit continues, and in fact is increasing, in 2005-06.

I've mentioned there has been a series of financial plans by this government that seem to have the shelf life of maybe a piece of fruit. They pretty quickly go out of use. If you look back at Minister Sorbara's 2004-05 budget, you will see there very clearly spending projections for 2005-06. If you take into account the revenue that they're actually receiving this year, the McGuinty government should be in a surplus. I think it was about \$1.6 billion. I'll have to check my notes from my second reading remarks, but there should actually be a surplus, if they had stuck to plan. If they had kept spending at what they had projected, which is a significant, rapid rate of increase in many areas, if they had stuck to their spending projections, they would actually be in a surplus position today. That would give them room to give a break to hard-pressed taxpayers across the province of Ontario who are now paying some \$2,000-plus more in taxes, fees and gas prices than they did before Dalton McGuinty became Premier of the province.

Similarly, some assistance could be given to helping businesses compete by reducing corporate tax rates. That would also be an option that this government would have at hand. We heard today very disturbing news about some 3,000 positions being lost at General Motors throughout our province. Of course, I'm very concerned about the loss of jobs at the St. Catharines plant, as it has such a big impact, not only on those individual families

but on the economy in the Niagara Peninsula as a whole. My colleague from Oshawa is extremely disconcerted about the tremendous loss of jobs at the Oshawa facility and the impact that's going to have on working families and businesses in the Oshawa area.

You would think that when the Dalton McGuinty government dished out—what was it?—some \$600 million to \$700 million to General Motors, they would have put better protections in there to ensure that they didn't take the money on one hand and then lay off thousands of people in Oshawa and St. Catharines on the other. Hopefully, we'll have better answers from the Premier at next question period about how he's going to try to remedy the very dire news that we heard today, about the dramatic impact on the individuals and families that work at General Motors, and also on the very disheartening impact on the economy as a whole, particularly in light of the some 42,000 manufacturing jobs that we've already seen flee the province under Premier Dalton McGuinty.

I think it's always important to look at these bills in the context of the overall economy and the overall fiscal plan, or lack thereof, of the McGuinty government. We cannot lose sight of the some \$2,000 each that working families are now out of pocket under this government. Of course, we cannot forget, as my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka indicated, the large number of broken promises that have taken place. I remember Dalton McGuinty staring into the TV camera during commercials saying that he would not raise our taxes. One of the first bills he actually brought before this assembly broke that solemn commitment and increased taxes on working families precipitously, as well as on businesses. Dalton McGuinty, as my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka indicated, also said that he would balance the budget each and every year. We found that to be a broken promise that keeps breaking. In fact, now they are projecting deficits out to 2008-09.

As I said, if they had stuck to a plan from the beginning, they would clearly show a surplus on the books today. There's no reason for these ongoing deficits except that Dalton McGuinty just can't help himself. He continues to throw money at problems in the province without realizing any benefits or improved services in key areas like health care and education.

As my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka indicated, the debt has gone up as well. In fact, I think the result of the increased debt under the McGuinty government is some \$1,000-plus to all working families in the province, when they try to pay down that debt over time.

To get to the bill at hand in a bit more detail, I do want to reiterate the opposition's concern, particularly—I'm going to jump out of order a little bit here. There are some schedules I wanted to speak to, but I'm going to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** Maybe you're right. I appreciate my colleague from Brantford saying that. You know what? You're right. Let's stick to the order. Let's not upset the whip or the Speaker. We'll stick to the alphabetical order, if you will, and start with schedule A.



I know that my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka is very interested in this, as am I. It's amendments to the Assessment Act. I remember at caucus—talking about old caucus discussions—that it was an important point to him: protecting managed forest and conservation initiatives in the province of Ontario. This will give the minister the ability, through regulation, to make consequential amendments to other provisions of the Assessment Act. It currently specifies that the current value of conservation land and managed forest land must be based only on the current use of the land. New subsection 19(5.2.1) allows the Minister of Finance to make regulations providing that “the current value of land in the managed forests property class shall be determined in accordance with the regulations.”

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I would think the intent here is to encourage better protection or a greater number of properties under the managed forests program or as conservation land. We certainly support the initiative to increase conservation land and managed forests in the province of Ontario and hope that the regulations that would come, if this bill were to pass third reading, would follow and would support that principle.

As I've said before, I was very proud to be part of a government, through the Lands for Life initiative, the Great Lakes Heritage Coast—part of a PC Party that brought in the Niagara Escarpment Commission Act, for example, or the Oak Ridges moraine legislation; a very strong commitment by the Ontario PC Party to preserving green space. We brought forward our own tax incentives to do so for individual private landowners as well. I haven't heard much debate about schedule A in Bill 197, but I hope I have correctly described the minister's intent that any regulations that were made are there to enhance the use and the viability of the conservation land and the forest management lands as well.

Schedule B: I wanted to add some further comment. Schedule B, as members will know, makes some changes to allow the retention of specific health care professionals. The bill, as currently written, gives the minister regulatory authority to determine which health care professions will benefit from changes in the way the taxes are assigned. To date, I think it has been a public commitment—not in legislation but a public commitment—that this would be restricted currently to doctors and to dentists. Certainly allowing family members, spouses and children of health care professionals to be shareholders in a professional corporation will, of course, permit the sharing of that profession's income across family members, bringing a tax benefit to that family and therefore contributing to the retention of doctors.

As I said, that has been extended as well to dentists under the Ministry of Finance's public commitments, but we would like to know reasons why other health care professionals have been excluded. I think this provision will actually be relatively limited in scope, depending on the income and the family status of the professionals—whether his or her spouse works, for example and the in-

come of his or her children. I think we know that splitting of income among children under 18 is limited under tax changes from 2000, so income splitting among children over 18 may be of use or may not be of use depending on what their current occupation is and their income levels.

That having been said, there are groups that have come forward to make a case, which I think is a very strong case, that they should also be allowed entry into this type of corporate tax benefit. Again, I would encourage the Ministry of Finance to work with me, as critic, and my colleague from the third party or the members of the assembly to best explore the other professions and to make sure that the financial impact is understood by all parties. But it seems to me sensible—unless given a major financial consideration that we could debate, but in absence of those numbers—to extend that benefit to other health professions or other professionals.

Just by way of example, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association will make this point. They're not included under this legislation because of course they fall under a different act entirely, and their act would have to be adjusted so they could take advantage of this. But it seems to me sensible that it is something that should be investigated, with members' full knowledge of the costs. But concerning retention initiatives for doctors and dentists, one would wonder why we're not extending them to vets, for example, or other health care professionals like chiropractors, physiotherapists, podiatrists, psychologists, registered practical nurses, occupational therapists, opticians, optometrists, speech language pathologists and audiologists, midwives, denturists, dietitians, chiropodists—to name the regulated health professionals. As I said, I would expect that because of income levels that would be conducive to this type of savings, there might not be a lot of individuals in those professions who could take advantage of this tax initiative, but certainly to retain them in the province of Ontario and certainly to try to get them to continue to serve in rural areas, in small towns like those that a lot of us represent—losing them to the larger cities, losing them across the border to the States or other provinces—I think we should fully explore this and of course would support those initiatives, subject to fully understanding from the Ministry of Finance the costs therein. As I said, it does seem eminently sensible.

I know that those of us who represent rural ridings in all three areas know that there is a significant problem in attracting large animal vets to serve in those areas, certainly with BSE, among other issues the agricultural sector faces today. The income level of a rural vet, a large animal vet, has been challenged and, I would expect, in many areas has gone down substantially. We're seeing more and more grads heading into the small animal veterinary business, which is laudable; they are needed as well. But we need to recognize the declining number of individuals who want to practise large animal medicine in the rural or northern areas. Perhaps this type of tax benefit could encourage more to enter that particular profession.



I will skip through, because I know my colleague from Simcoe-Grey wants to talk about schedules C, D and E.

I wanted to make a little comment; I neglected schedule G as part of Bill 197. I don't know if I spoke to schedule G on second reading. I know my colleagues were in rapt attention, but I think I missed schedule G, which is the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act, 2005.

Well, here's the problem: This has been announced. I think it was part of the Bob Rae review, and it's in this bill that has been before the Legislature for some time. But no details have come forward as to how this council is going to operate. Certainly, we do have some concerns on accountability, and I hope we'll hear some commitments from government members that there will be strong accountability provisions as part of schedule G in Bill 197.

Let me give you an example of what causes us concern. The Greenbelt Foundation was recently flowed some \$25 million. I think it was born out of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Tourism has responded to questions in the House about it. But what is actually driving people crazy in the greenbelt area, getting under their skin, is the fact that some \$1.5 million of those funds had been used to deluge airwaves and newspapers with some ads that many of my constituents have described as insulting. There is one about a deer, and I think the mother counsels her son that deer live in forests. Another lets us know that apples don't grow in grocery stores; they grow on trees. I'm not sure—

**Interjection:** Water doesn't come from the tap.

**Mr. Hudak:** And another one that water doesn't actually come from the tap. It tells us where water actually comes from.

I think, by and large, the people who listen to these ads will find them somewhat insulting.

What's even worse is that there are people in the greenbelt areas, like farmers, who have had their business options frozen, and taxpayers in communities like Lincoln who have had their growth frozen and will see their taxes rise to pay for essential services like roads and bridges or sewers. When they see this \$1.5 million going into these rather insulting advertisements and not flowing to assist farmers, not flowing to assist these municipalities that have had their growth frozen, they find that use of taxpayers' money very upsetting. To hear that on the radio on a regular basis or see it in newspapers just reinforces the fact that the government has no real commitment to helping out greenbelt municipalities or farmers that are caught in the greenbelt area. You would think they would have prioritized assisting agriculture to find new markets or new research in the greenbelt area rather than spending some \$1.5 million on annoying advertisements.

We've yet to find out if this advertising company is particularly connected to the Liberal campaign, like we heard about the \$6-million contract that went to the one company that had done some volunteer work for the

McGuinty campaign. Hopefully, that's not the case. Hopefully, it's just a misjudgement in the use of these funds to the Greenbelt Foundation.

The second thing that my constituents are increasingly upset about in the use of the Greenbelt Foundation's money is the fact that they have rented these posh offices in Yorkville. Any of those from throughout the province who have visited or shopped in Yorkville in the city of Toronto will know that this is some of the most expensive commercial real estate in the entire city. Why would the Greenbelt Foundation rent property in this very posh, expensive neighbourhood and use these funds, which could be better utilized for supporting farmers or municipalities in the greenbelt area, to go into this expensive commercial space, let alone it being in the city of Toronto? You would think it would be eminently more sensible to have the Greenbelt Foundation's office—this is a foundation supposedly to promote the greenbelt and make sure that the greenbelt is a success. You'd think they would have found office space in, say, Beamsville or Grimsby or somewhere else in the greenbelt area. I know there's a lot of empty office space that they could have utilized in the Niagara Peninsula or other parts of the province rather than investing who knows how much money in expensive real estate in the posh Yorkville neighbourhood.

I do hope they'll reconsider that. The Niagara Escarpment Commission, for example, has its offices in Georgetown, so it's quite close to those stakeholders. The escarpment runs a long way, as we all know, but at least they've made an effort to make some outreach to areas of the escarpment. I think it's regrettable that the Greenbelt Foundation has decided that Yorkville's plush scenery is the best place for that office. We certainly hope the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in schedule G, whenever it is enacted and funded, will refrain from the irresponsible and, I suggest, partisan motives behind the Greenbelt Foundation spending to date.

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We also have brought forward questions in this assembly about the recent round of EQAO testing and the extent to which the results may have been doctored; for example, allowing students to use calculators for the entirety of the math test when they weren't allowed to do so before, and extending the time for the sitting. Colleagues in the assembly have talked about teachers being encouraged to mark the tests easier. So we're not exactly comparing apples to apples in the EQAO test. I do hope that if schedule G does move forward and this bill does go forward after third reading, they will refrain from those types of political motivations and ensure the schedule G quality council is truly motivated to improve the quality of post-secondary education.

Second last is schedule L, the Private Career Colleges Act. I hope I'm not stealing thunder from Simcoe-Grey or Lanark-Carleton. I suspect it's something that Lanark-Carleton will find quite interesting, knowing his own personal commitment to higher education. The Private Career Colleges Act will give the superintendent,



as I think the position is defined, of private career colleges the power to set up a regulatory scheme. I think members of the assembly always will be concerned about increased red tape in the operation of any particular business: Is government getting in the way? But I think that in this particular case, setting high standards through a regulatory scheme to govern the private career colleges is the right approach. I commend the previous Minister of Finance, Mr. Sorbara, who I know was committed to this personally, for bringing this forward. Of course, Mr. Kitchin at the Ontario Association of Career Colleges has done a tremendous job of pushing for this legislation for quite some time.

If it had been a separate standing bill, I would suspect it would have unanimous consent of the House. We may quibble with some minor details, but I think the need for quality control and high standards in career colleges would be supported by the vast number, if not fully supported, in the House. The problem is, it has been tucked into a financial bill that is an irresponsible implementation of budget initiatives with the high spending, the high taxes and the runaway deficits that I spoke to earlier in my remarks. Sadly, schedule L was included as part of this package. But I do think that as part of a larger financial package, it is a bit of a ray of sunshine amid a number of initiatives that I think are bad for the province, like the tax hikes, like the runaway spending, and like, as this bill does in several circumstances, giving ministers even greater authority to retroactively increase taxes, for example. They certainly have not earned the trust of taxpayers to be given new responsibilities.

The last thing is schedule M, which amends the Retail Sales Tax Act. I know many of my colleagues in the House, particularly my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington, Mr. Arnott, had brought forward an initiative to extend the sales tax exemption to booster seats for children from the current application to child car seats only. Of course, the government has brought forward a bill to mandate booster seats for children of a certain age and a certain size. My colleague from Waterloo-Wellington had rightly said that they then should, at the very least, extend the sales tax credit to cover those booster seats. I'm pleased to see that they have done so, and that aspect of schedule M is supportable, as my colleague has said. The sad fact of the matter is, though, it is jumbled into a financial plan that continues to change, that is irresponsible with taxpayer dollars and that is harming the viability of businesses in Ontario in taking the lion's share out of the pockets of hard-working taxpayers, seniors and young people.

I appreciate the opportunity to add some further comments to my Bill 197 second reading comments. I know my colleagues are very anxious to continue debate in the Legislature.

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I'm pleased to spend a few moments to speak on this budget bill. I believe it's the first significant budget bill the McGuinty government has put forward after a couple of years in office. One thing I note is that there's nothing in it for

jobs for the people of Collingwood. We have lost 520 jobs in the past 18 months. Alcoa Wheel Products of Collingwood—I'll read their letter in a moment—has written the Premier—and I've brought this up on other occasions, as has John Tory on several occasions during question period—indicating there are another 420 jobs at stake. This bill wipes out the corporate tax cuts we had in place. It wipes out a number of tax incentives that we had in place to attract industry. What we fail to see is any indication from this government that they understand the need for an economic policy, that they need to lead with jobs. In all of their decision-making—the greatest dignity you can give a human being is the opportunity for employment, not the opportunity to go on state welfare.

I note in some of the notes that our research has provided that, actually, welfare has gone up in the province of Ontario in the time this government has been in office. In fact, there are currently 388,391 Ontarians who rely on welfare each month. That's an increase of 498 since the Liberals took office in October 2003. The number of single employable people on welfare is up by 9,155 people. That's a 10% increase since October 2003. I remind you that each and every year of the Harris and Eves governments, the welfare rolls were going down and people were finding jobs. They weren't just dropping out of the statistics; they were finding jobs. You're going to see welfare rolls go up again if more companies leave places like Collingwood.

Today, of course, we've seen GM announce thousands and thousands of jobs—people to be laid off and families to have a terrible Christmas. Just to think that those are good-paying automotive jobs, traditionally the backbone of the Ontario economy, the automotive sector, and we're seeing massive layoffs, in spite of the fact that the government says it's spending \$500 million—probably unprecedented because they say everything they do is unprecedented, so let's take their word for it. They say they were using that money to attract the one big plant that has come to Ontario since the Liberals have been in office, and that's Toyota.

But Mr. Cordiano, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, admitted in question period today for the first time, and we sat here aghast, that not one penny of the \$500 million has been spent yet. The question was: "Why are you giving GM money when they're laying off thousands and thousands of people, closing plants and shutting down runs in assembly lines in Ontario?" He got up and said, "Well, we haven't spent one penny."

Now, I recall just a few weeks ago people turning sod down in Cambridge on the Toyota plant and very specifically referencing this unprecedented \$500 million and that that was one of the primary reasons why Toyota came to the province. Well, they haven't got a penny. The way you guys across the way live up to promises, they may never see a penny. So I don't think Toyota made their decision—I have Honda in my riding, and I have a pretty good idea how these decisions are made by the Japanese. I'm sure your gift, or lack of gift, really had nothing to do with it. So you can take that off the brag



list, because it simply isn't true, and Mr. Cordiano straightened us out on that today.

Ellie Chaves, who is the plant manager at Alcoa Wheel Products Collingwood, wrote the Premier a very thoughtful letter on September 22. I'm just going to read it into the record.

"Premier McGuinty,

"Since the opening of the Ontario electricity market in May 2002, and particularly during the last few months, we have become increasingly concerned about the viability of our operations in Ontario. At the present time, the price of electricity is by far the main factor impacting our competitiveness.

"With its 420 employees in a community of approximately 16,000 people, Alcoa Wheel Products is a major employer in Collingwood. Our payroll and associated costs are in excess of \$20 million annually. We also buy more than \$6 million in goods and services from local vendors and pay around \$600,000 in municipal tax per year. Our plant produces cast aluminum wheels for customers like GM, Ford, DCX and Honda, which awarded us their plant manager's award in 2005 in recognition of our commitment to quality and customer service.

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"After much effort, we are actively looking to achieve significant gains in energy efficiency and overall productivity at our plant. Among other things, we are looking to maximize night shift usage when electricity prices tend to be lower. We have cut scrap rates by more than 40%. Attendance as well as our safety record are continuing to improve even though we already have an already positive track record. Overall, labour costs are down 15% while daily production is increasing. Despite all the above, the resulting benefits have been erased by rising electricity costs. Rather than securing our jobs and making our facility more competitive, the productivity gains recently achieved simply helped pay for the additional cost of electricity. In fact, so far this year, our average electricity cost is 17% higher than last year. For August 2005 alone, our power bill is up by 70%. On average this year, we are spending about \$115,000 per month more than last year for electricity supply, with this being the growing trend. This is simply not acceptable and sustainable in the highly competitive industry of aluminum casting."

By the way, Alcoa's main competitors are some of the very people that Premier McGuinty was making friends with over in China. China is our greatest competitor. He should have stayed here and actually had the round table in Collingwood, which the mayor and I asked for, but I'll get to that in a minute.

"Although we can appreciate your government's objective to retire coal-fired generation to improve air quality, we strongly believe that this must not be achieved to the detriment of Ontario workers. Electricity may even become a greater cause for concern in the future if coal-fired generation is mainly replaced by natural gas and refurbished nuclear generation. Not only is natural gas a very expensive and highly volatile energy

commodity, but it would likely become the price-setting unit during peak periods." As a former energy minister, I can tell Ellie that she's bang on. "As for nuclear, our past experience showed us how financially hazardous this path can be.

"We are urging the Ontario government to address this issue promptly. Without a doubt, the cost of electricity is one of the main challenges facing the Ontario manufacturing sector. Alcoa Wheel Products is seeking support and relief from the government to compensate for high electricity costs. In operation since 1987, our facility is well integrated in the Ontario economy and, most importantly, is a major economic driver for the Collingwood community. Despite all our efforts to preserve the competitiveness of our plant, our future in Ontario is seriously clouded by this single issue. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that the restructuring of the Ontario electricity sector does not result in a massive shift of industrial jobs outside our province.

"We look forward to hearing from you on this most critical issue.

"Sincerely,

"Ellie M. Chaves, CMA

"Plant manager

"Alcoa Wheels Products Collingwood"

That was the first industry that I've seen in many, many years come forward in such a cool way. There's nothing in this budget bill that will help them. As I said, you've taken out any of the tax savings they might have seen so they could maintain their competitiveness or bring back their competitiveness in the province of Ontario. Electricity rates are up 17%, a huge amount of money in a very short period of time, and it's having a ripple effect.

I'll read another letter of October 11, only a month ago, from Dean Muncaster, the chair of the LDC, the local electricity distribution company. Dean is chair of COLLUS Power Corp., the local LDC. By the way, the subject of the letter is "Industry Concerns Over High Electricity Prices." This particular budget bill does nothing, and we've seen nothing from the government in the past two years, that would give us any comfort on electricity prices. There's no transition program, which there should be.

When electricity prices went up—mark my words: It was after we left office that they started to skyrocket in such huge waves, and not totally the government's fault. Obviously we had a demand and supply problem, and supply wasn't meeting demand in the hot summer. But we had the blackout; we dealt with that. We had lots of challenges in the electricity sector too. The fact of the matter is, there's no economic plan, there's no energy plan. When we do see responses, they're back-of-a-napkin-type responses.

And you've got to get serious about jobs. Liberals traditionally have not been good on the job front. You have an opportunity to change that history in the next two years that you're in government. So far, you've got a failing grade.

Anyway, this letter from COLLUS says:

"Dear Mr. McGuinty:

"As chair of the local distribution company servicing Collingwood, Thornbury, Stayner and Creemore I feel compelled to write to you on behalf of our local industries.

"COLLUS Power Corp. is committed to providing excellent service and a reliable power system to all of our customers. Our staff has been strong supporters of many changes implemented by the government under your leadership with regards to the electricity industry. We have had key staff involved in many task force activities and we continue to work with a variety of groups in an effort to find the most efficient and cost-effective ways to implement the ongoing transformation of the industry. A key part of our effectiveness within our service territory is our close relationship with our industries. The manufacturing sector and the jobs it creates is the backbone of our community. The industries provide jobs both directly and indirectly through their use of services within the area.

"The automotive sector is particularly important to Collingwood and surrounding area. Alcoa Wheel Products, Pilkington Glass, Goodyear tire, Goodall Rubber, and VOA Canada are the largest industrial employers in our area, and collectively represent ... 35% of our electricity supply requirement. Over the last few months, many of our industries have raised significant concerns regarding the impact electricity prices have on their ability to remain competitive. They are finding it increasingly difficult to compete against similar plants both in the US and other countries. The continuing trend of increasing energy costs in Ontario is of growing concern to their parent companies. The IESO recently provided the following chart depicting the rising trend in pricing." It shows the prices going up per kilowatt hour from September 2004 to September 2005. We see that it goes from just about five cents per kilowatt hour to just at the 10-cent mark, so you've seen a doubling of prices in one year—unheard of in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Muncaster goes on to say, "Your government has made impressive headway by allowing the LDCs to work with their customers on conservation initiatives." So he's trying to be fair to the Premier. "We applaud your foresight and commitment to conservation," although I think he's being very generous there. I haven't really seen any conservation programs. "Unfortunately as you yourself have stated, conservation alone will not solve the immediate problem facing our industries. They need strong leadership beyond that which can be provided by local governments. The Ontario Energy Board has established fixed pricing plans for the residential and small commercial" sectors. "A similar pricing plan could provide our industries with some immediate comfort during the transition to a strong stable electricity market in Ontario." Mr. Muncaster is making a suggestion to the Premier, and not just complaining.

"Collingwood has lost over 550 jobs in the past 18 months—a significant number for a community of our size.

"In each of the plant closings increasing electricity costs have been cited as a major reason for moving these facilities to other jurisdictions. Many of our remaining industrial customers are on the verge of following suit.

"On behalf of our industrial customers, I urge your government to address this issue with the utmost urgency. Every effort should be made to avoid further plant closings and job losses.

"I look forward to your reply on this important issue."

This letter, along with the letter from Alcoa Wheel Products—the mayor, Terry Geddes, is doing an excellent job in Collingwood, and we wrote the Premier before he went to China and simply asked, "Would you yourself attend a round table of labour, industry, politicians and economic development people in the Collingwood area, and Clearview, Stayner, Wasaga Beach and the Town of the Blue Mountains in my riding, or send your senior cabinet ministers to meet with this group, which very much wants to tell your government first-hand the difficulties they're having?" This is one of the most prosperous areas of the province, so if I'm having problems in my riding, where the unemployment rate has always been among the lowest in the province throughout my 42 years of life—I know that because I did papers on it when I was in university. The fact of the matter is, if I'm having problems in my part of the province, imagine what other parts are. Of course, we saw that in Oshawa today with the thousands and thousands of job losses being announced by General Motors.

The Premier hasn't responded. When Mr. Cordiano, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, was at a Honda line-off ceremony for the new Civic, I bent his elbow—

**Mr. Miller:** Ear.

**Mr. Wilson:** His ear; we weren't bending our elbows. At that ceremony down in Alliston, he graciously said that he would meet with Alcoa. It was after that that we asked the Premier if he would also attend a round table. I think it's very reasonable. If you don't want me there because you think it's partisan, at least listen to the mayor of Collingwood, who, by the way, was acclaimed in his last election and may very well be this time. He's pretty popular and is doing a good job.

The fact of the matter is, the Premier—no response. John Tory, the leader of the official opposition, has asked the Premier on four separate occasions in question period if he would at least go and listen to the people of Collingwood and area. the Premier hasn't said no, but he hasn't said yes. He's been asked so often now, though, that the answer obviously must be no.

On December 13, John Tory is going to hold that round table. We gave the Premier lots of time—a couple of months—to decide whether he was going to attend anything. But somebody has got to listen to them. I'm doing my best, as the local MPP. The MP, Helena Guergis, is doing her best. But these companies want to get to people who are more senior than me in terms of leadership in this place, so Mr. Tory has agreed to attend a round table on December 13. The mayor and I are in



the process of putting that together, along with council members.

1700

You shouldn't have to go grovelling like that. Jobs should be the number one issue for any government. I don't think that is just an ideology. As I said earlier in my remarks, the greatest dignity you can give a human being is the opportunity for employment. For those of us who grew up in families where perhaps our fathers were unemployed from time to time, and our brothers and sisters were unemployed from time to time, which occurs in every family, it's devastating. It's horrible. I feel very sorry for the people in Oshawa and area and Windsor, who are going to experience these layoffs, because there's no safety net here and very little hope. Again, the government says it spent a great pile of money to attract Toyota here. Today we find out that not one penny has flowed, and probably they had nothing to do with Toyota's decision to be here in the province. That's about jobs in my local area. I'll just take about five more minutes and then yield the floor to my very senior colleague, Mr. Sterling.

This \$5.6-billion deficit that the Tories apparently left the Liberals: First of all, I remind people when they ask me—not very many people ask me, by the way, but the odd one does, usually Tories, and they're disappointed that we left such a huge deficit behind. I remind them, first of all, that we left halfway through a fiscal year, and that you could have easily balanced the budget in your first year, if you just had some spending restraint. Of the \$5.6 billion, you probably racked up \$3.2 billion to \$3.4 billion.

When I was in cabinet—and I was a senior member in cabinet for eight years—I figured, as we were leaving, that we might have had about a \$2-billion problem that we would have dealt with in the next six months. The election was in October; the fiscal year ends on March 31. No government would panic about a \$2-billion deficit. When I was Minister of Health and we only had a \$17.4 billion budget, and growing every year—we never cut a penny out of health care. It's \$34 billion today, but even at \$17.4 billion when I was Minister of Health in 1995-97, \$2 billion would have been a Kodak moment. You don't even know what your invoices are until six months after the fiscal year, because doctors have up to six months to send in their invoices and so do hospitals.

For anyone to definitively say on their first day in office that there's a \$5.6-billion deficit—and by the way, they put that figure out, and then they go and hire Erik Peters, who hated us, for \$10,000 or something like that. He was hired by the NDP—I keep hearing that we hired him—on a 10-year, fixed term as auditor of this province. He hated us because we wouldn't give him more staff and we wouldn't give him a pay raise. The only time I ever heard that man speak to me was when he was riding me for more staff and a pay raise for his office. He didn't give a hoot about taxpayers in this province. A former CBC auditor comes in here, tells us horrible things over the years—he wouldn't even work with you. I was

running the biggest budget in government, and the man never met me.

You hired him for 10,000 bucks as a so-called independent consultant after you got into office. Well, consultant my butt. The fact of the matter is, he was a paid henchman for you, to back up the number you made up before you even hired him. You had a press release out before you even got the so-called independent report.

I don't think you were very responsible; I don't think you've been very responsible at all with the taxpayers' money. You've gouged taxpayers in the very year where you've probably had the best increase in revenue in recent history in this province. You've had the best increase in revenue because jobs have been good up till now and people have been employed. That's declining rapidly, and you're going to have a problem with revenue next year, but you've had record revenue. Corporate revenues went up significantly. Mind you, it's mostly the banks and that, which you guys used to rail against. You don't do anything about high interest rates and so on for consumers now, but you railed against them in opposition. Some of the big corporations that you hated have record profits this year, I note, including the car insurance companies you railed against in opposition. We never did get the 10% decrease we were supposed to get; most of us didn't get it, anyway. By the way, it was supposed to be 20% the first time that promise was made. But you know, when you have 231 promises, you can't be expected to keep too many of them.

In a year where you have unexpected record revenue increases, you actually dip into the pockets of ordinary Ontarians for all kinds of new taxes. Let's just review them for a moment here. The average family sees \$2,000 more out of their pocket this year in additional taxes to the Ontario government—not to any other government, just to the Ontario government. Of course, the first broken promise was the health tax. This ad firm—which, by the way, is seeing a 7,000% increase in its advertising contracts from the Liberal government since these guys came into office—made up the ad, and McGuinty was in all our living rooms during the 2003 election saying, "I will not raise your taxes." That turned out not to be true. So I don't know if the other ads they're making up for you guys are true now, but certainly the one they made up for you during the election wasn't true, because we all know about the \$300 to \$900 health tax you brought in. The health tax takes \$690 out of the pockets of the average Ontario family, which is two income earners making a total of \$61,000. So they're paying about \$690 a year more in a health tax—and by the way, people, if you do your own taxes this year, go to the back page. There is a line—there was one there last year, but this is the first year where it's a full-year hit on you, not just a half-year hit—that actually says, "Ontario health tax." All it is, folks—don't be fooled; it's not necessarily going into health care; it's going into general revenues. It doesn't even totally replace, but it's partly replacing, the surtax line. What's the difference? You guys label it "Ontario health tax." A tax is a tax is a tax. It all goes



into general revenues and then it's divvied up among the various ministries and programs. It's on the same line with the surtax that was brought in by David Peterson, originally. So we're back into the good old Liberal tax-and-spend days.

I'll just wind up by saying that electricity costs for the average home have gone up \$180 per year, and they're going to rise significantly in the spring. Your own ministers keep admitting that. Natural gas has gone up about \$65 a year per household. Gasoline, of course, is up over \$600 for the average family so far this year. Drivers' licences are up \$25. Of course, annual eye exams cost at least \$75—I had one the other day; mine cost \$88—not to mention if you need chiropractic services or any of the other delisted services. Finally, as a result of the cancelled 2004 income tax cuts, which we had put in place many years before and were being phased in in a sensible way, you lose another \$240.

So the average family is being hit hard, and there's no reason for it. You could balance the books of this province on the unexpected revenue alone: close to \$1.3 billion. You didn't have to tax people in a time when there's uncertainty in the economy. You need an economic plan to help places like Collingwood and you need to begin with the simple suggestion that we've made, and that is that the Premier or senior ministers come and listen to these towns where they're having problems. You need to know what the problems are before you can solve them. Then you need to hear solutions from the local communities. A lot of these people have been in business a lot longer than most of us have been in politics, except for Mr. Sterling—and I've taken a great deal of his time.

I appreciate those in the House on the Liberal side who were listening. Unfortunately, we'd like a few more senior cabinet ministers to take the job issue seriously. It's not only going to affect you at the polls, but it's going to affect you in your heart when we go through another period of time in this province, as we did in the past, when Mr. Peterson was last in, of great prosperity, and they blew it. You don't want to blow the prosperity. You don't want to blow the economic engine of Canada, called Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The senior member from Lanark–Carleton.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** “Senior.”

This gives me an opportunity to draw some attention back to the original document: the budget of 2005-06. There are some interesting numbers and some interesting information in the budget document which I think people have long forgotten. Perhaps one of the most significant numbers is this: that this Liberal government, since October 4, 2003, has increased the provincial debt by \$10.4 billion. The Dalton McGuinty government has increased the debt of this province by over \$10 billion in the two years that he's been in government.

I think that's a significant number, a significant detraction from the ability of this group to be able to manage the finances of the province of Ontario when in

good times, in some of the best times this province has ever had, the Liberal government has increased the debt of the province by over \$10 billion. That's about a 7% or 8% increase, taking it from about \$135 billion or \$136 billion to \$146 billion.

**1710**

Another interesting factor is that I don't know, in the 28 years that I've had the privilege of representing people in eastern Ontario, when there has been a more difficult time for our agricultural sector. Our agricultural sector has been hit with tougher regulations to meet in terms of the environment and with the mad cow disease outbreak, the BSE outbreak, and they've had a flooding of the agricultural market in terms of commodities from the United States when they were highly subsidized. What did this government do for 2005-06, this financial year? They took a budget from \$733 million down to \$564 million, a huge decrease in resources to perhaps the most troubled sector in our economy.

I met last Friday afternoon with our agricultural critic, Toby Barrett, John Baird, and many representatives of the OFA from the city of Ottawa and the valley, Lanark, Renfrew, Dundas, Grenville and Leeds counties, and they were explaining to us, again, how desperate the agricultural sector is at this time. The OFA is meeting out near the airport in Toronto today and I believe they have a reception tonight. I just wonder how many Liberals are going to wander out there and say, “We cut your budget by 20% this year, but we really feel for you. We really want to help you,” when in fact they've cut the budget from \$733 million to \$564 million. That's what the document says.

The other interesting number I'd like to bring forth is the one with regard to the capital expenditures of the various ministries. One of the ministries that I was fortunate enough to lead was the Ministry of Transportation. In the year that I was there, in 2001, the Ministry of Transportation spent \$818 million on capital. We heard the transportation minister say today, “You didn't do anything for transportation. You didn't do anything for gridlock when you were there,” etc.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** That's right.

**Mr. Sterling:** I see the parliamentary assistant. Guess what they're spending this year in transportation. It's \$622 million; 25% less than in 2001, and they claim that they're taking care of the gridlock problem.

The numbers don't lie. The numbers tell the story that in fact this government doesn't have its priorities in the areas where the people are hurting and wanting improvement. Transportation gridlock: 25% less in the budget. In terms of agriculture, where people are losing their homes and their farms: cut the budget by 20%. In terms of debt, when we're in some of the best economic times that we will see for a long period of time: increase the provincial debt by over \$10 billion in two years. This does not bode well for the taxpayers of Ontario.

It's not like they didn't get any more money to do anything. In fact, when they took over government, the revenues of the government were \$68.4 billion. It's now



projected, in the 2005-06 budget, to go up to \$82.1 billion—a huge 13% to 14% increase. They've had and they do have a huge amount of money to deal with the problems that they face. The one thing, though, that I would note, as the Chairman of the public accounts committee and having gone through a number of hearings in the past two years with respect to the auditor's report—which is, of course, the function of the public accounts committee—is there seems to be very little concern on the part of this government about saving money. They don't want to become more efficient. They are less concerned about becoming more efficient than they are concerned about creating new programs that have high profiles so that they can go out and announce that they're saving the world: "We're spending another \$30 million here, we're spending another \$50 million there, we're spending," whatever.

Now, notwithstanding that, I do realize that there are significant pressures, particularly in the health care area, but, as we heard at the public accounts conference in Niagara-on-the-Lake this summer, there are significant ways to save money in the health care industry and in our health care system. This government is not addressing that particular problem.

The public accounts committee deals with the Provincial Auditor's report, which usually comes down in late November. I understand that the Provincial Auditor's report will be coming down on December 6 of this year. After that, the public accounts committee will decide upon several—usually eight or nine, 10—sections of the auditor's report to review. We call before that committee the senior bureaucrats and the deputy ministers, who almost without exception come and appear in front of that committee. We have, over the past year, dealt with nine or 10 different subjects. One of the subjects we wanted to deal with was this notion that the minister campaigned in his budget to deal with the stranded debt of the electricity sector. You'll remember he tried the sleight of hand of \$4 billion so that he could have a balanced budget. As the Conservative caucus didn't think this was proper accounting, and it came out that the auditor didn't think it was proper accounting, the government withdrew that sleight of hand at a later date. One of the great parts of the public accounts committee is that it was brought to the fore and perhaps it brought a little bit of gentle pressure on the government to pull back that sleight of hand with regard to the accounting that they were presenting to the public of Ontario, that in fact they were reducing their budget by an extra \$4 billion.

We have dealt with some other important issues. One of them is the Family Responsibility Act—and we have published that report and tabled that report here in the Legislature. I think it's important to know that the Family Responsibility Office has, over the period of time, had difficulty with its information systems. The public accounts committee was recognizing how badly the Family Responsibility Office has been run in the past, and that they were shifting and turning with regard to how they were going to carry on in the future. In my

view, there has been no greater opportunity to save money than on their information systems in the Family Responsibility Office, yet this government refused to take the package which the province of British Columbia had in place, change a few of the rules with regard to the Family Responsibility Office and go home with a great system. In the province of British Columbia, the Family Responsibility Office, on average, answers the phone within four or five minutes. How many of us in our constituency offices have had calls from people saying they've been on the line for 45, 55 minutes and somebody hung up at the other end.

The government—and governments—must be more flexible in terms of the programming and the implementation of their programs. I think that the Family Responsibility Office showed us how that could have been done, yet I suspect that the \$15 million or \$16 million they're going to spend on their new IT system won't work in the end and we'll have that office back to the public accounts committee not for the second time but for the third time.

1720

It's my belief that we should change the standing orders of this Legislature to provide, as they do in Westminster and some other Parliaments, an automatic debate on reports from the public accounts committee. We don't have that. We table the report here. It's paid attention to by the deputy minister and the ministry, but that's where it ends. I think we have to give more accountability on that end.

My problem with this government is that they are not innovative. They are not saving money. They are not trying to be more efficient with taxpayers' money, and we need that if we're going to be able to provide our health care and education systems into the future.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I think I'll just respond to the comments that were made by the last speaker, and this is in connection with both of the reports we've done in public accounts, but frankly a new technology system that I raised a question about that was in the public eye today, because I'll bet you this one's going to come back to bite the government before too long as well.

My concern with the Family Responsibility Office is that there has been widespread recognition for a number of years now that a new computer system is needed. The question is, where does that sit at this point in time and what will be the outcome?

Regrettably—and I've been on the committee for a long time—every new initiative, effort, made by a government to bring in a new computer system has resulted in a fiasco. I am reminded of the fiasco involving Andersen/Accenture and the new computer system at social assistance. I am reminded of the integrated justice project and the decision that was finally made by the government to have to abandon that project after very significant cost overruns and technology that was not working.



We raised comments about the Family Responsibility Office when we had the ministry before us well over a year ago, asking what we hoped were relevant questions: "Is this system going to work? Is it going to do what needs to be done? Is it going to be helpful for the staff to use? Is it going to be too complex? Frankly, is it going to be completed on time?" We hope that we will get a positive response to that, but I don't remain very optimistic.

But here again we had another example in the media, and one that I raised in the House, about Smart Systems. Five years now, the government has been pushing its e-health initiative—under the former government and now under the current government—where \$260 million has been spent and the folks in the hospital system who are supposed to use this saying they haven't seen any deliverables. From our perspective, where the money is going for this project is a mystery. Frankly, I think that the most recent initiative, the government's e-health initiative, is something else that the Auditor General should take a hard, long look at, because I bet we'd see another problem in the same vein as we've seen with other computer problems by various governments.

**Ms. Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I want to state, first of all, that the Budget Measures Act is consistent with the priorities that the Ontario government under Dalton McGuinty is building on. It builds on the determinants of creating a strong and healthy economy, and a healthy economic environment. We have provided in this budget historic investments in post-secondary education. That is one of the determinants of a strong economic base.

On deficit reduction, we've reduced the deficit that we inherited to \$3 billion, half of what was projected in 2004. It's a plan to deliver better schools for improved learning. That's what this budget does.

As I said, I listened with some humour, I guess, to the member from Simcoe-Grey and his eccentric remarks about the former Provincial Auditor. Erik Peters has had an impeccable reputation and maintained a high degree of professionalism in his capacity as Provincial Auditor. He had a job. His job was in a scrutiny role when it came to looking at the government finances.

That's what this budget is all about. The naysayers can say what they want, but it is about creating a healthy environment, a social environment as well as an economic environment.

**Mr. Jackson:** Just to follow on the comments by the member for Sarnia-Lambton, the government has announced money for post-secondary over five years. The problem is that it's not in this budget we're being asked to vote for; it's not there. So not only is the government not funding the money up front, which would be sort of a fiscal acid test of the political integrity of such an announcement; rather, it is designed to placate the post-secondary institutions, their students and their faculty into believing that they are going to get this money. Well, according to this budget, it's not coming in year one.

The ministry and the minister and this government have already acknowledged that there will be a further \$5-billion deficit next year, which will bring their accumulated deficit, as Liberals in Ontario, in their third year to \$15 billion, and they still aren't guaranteeing that their post-secondary money will flow in year two. They talk about accountability agreements, but they won't tell the post-secondary institutions, whether they're universities or colleges, what that will entail. They talk mysteriously about envelopes of money with outcomes, but they won't tell them how those outcomes will be measured. Is it fair to a university that has a high graduating rate but not a very high job placement rate that they should be punished?

These are legitimate questions, but the Liberals are doing what Liberals do well. Buried in the budget is the real truth: that the dollars flowing this year do not match up with the political rhetoric, which not only the media has bought, but several members of the government as well.

**Mr. Prue:** I listened to the debate for the last hour. In the two minutes, I only have time to comment on two of the speakers.

The member from Erie-Lincoln raised the issue of income-splitting. This was, I have to admit, quite hidden from me in my first reading of the budget when things took place last May. It wasn't until I had a group of people—chiropractors, veterinarians—come to my office and explain to me the unfairness of the budget provision—and when I looked at it, it is. It is very unfair for a government to single out one group of individuals, namely the doctors of this province, and leave out all of the other health professionals when it comes to income-splitting. It seems to me that if that is a fair reaction for the doctors—and I think the doctors requested this as part of their income package before they signed on with the government—it should also be fair for all the other health care professionals. So I'd like to commend the member for Erie-Lincoln for bringing this up as well.

The member from Lanark-Carleton talked about the agricultural sector. I have stood up in this House many times and told people that I am a boy from Toronto; I have spent my whole life here. I've never even really spent any time on a farm. But I will tell you that I do spend time with farmers. I do spend time when they come here to the Legislature or when they have to talk. Because we all know that without the farmers, it would be very difficult to eat. We would have to import all of the stuff at higher costs from the United States or elsewhere around the world. I know the farmers are hurting and they tell us they're hurting. The grain and oilseeds producers were here just a week ago and told us how much more they had expected from this government and how much more they need, if not in this budget then at least to start looking ahead to the next one.

1730

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Lanark-Carleton has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Sterling:** I'd like to thank all of the members who participated, especially the member for Beaches-East



York, who's obviously labouring today with a cold and laryngitis.

I guess of all of the remarks that I made, and given that the majority of the area that I represent is urban—the west part of the city of Ottawa, which was formerly the city of Kanata and incidentally, houses the greatest hockey team in North America, the Ottawa Senators—notwithstanding that tremendous asset that we have in Lanark—Carleton, we also have these farmers who are at the point of desperation. At the meeting that I was at with these people from the farming community, they're not talking just about trying to get their farm back in place; they're talking about how they're going to save their homes and how they can possibly even think about continuing farming. Their sons are not interested in it; their daughters are not interested in farming, because the young people have recognized that it's almost a hopeless cause. It's so hopeless, and yet we have a government which reduces the agriculture budget by about 25% to 30%.

I believe that what's important for a government overall is to set priorities, and those priorities should be based upon, first, the people who are most in need. In this province, at this time, I believe the people who are suffering the greatest are the agriculture community. They have been disregarded by this government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Martel:** I'll be providing the concluding remarks here today for the NDP, as our critic is not in very good shape. So I'm going to do the remarks instead.

I'm going to focus on three things that the government promised that were not included in this budget. I also want to talk about something that the government promised it wouldn't do that found its way into last year's budget and still hasn't been addressed. Let me begin with that one, because that is the health tax that this government has imposed on Ontario families, a health tax that is horribly regressive and hits those at the lowest incomes, modest- and middle-income families, with a real whack of new taxes.

Let me go back to what Dalton McGuinty had to say about health taxes, health premiums—whatever court case or arbitration the government's involved in, it changes from “tax” to “premium” and back again. But let's just talk about the health tax that the government promised it wouldn't put forward. This goes back to January 25, 2002. It's a long way, but it's worth repeating because it was a press release put out by the Ontario Liberal Party in the midst of the Conservative leadership race that was going on at the time. The potential candidates for the Conservative leadership were musing openly about whether or not one or the other of them might bring in a health tax/health premium if elected. This is the Liberal response to the Conservatives publicly musing about the possibility of a health care tax/health care premium in Ontario.

Queen's Park, January 25, 2002: “Ontario Liberals oppose the return of OHIP premiums because they are a tax hike on working families, says” Liberal “leader Dalton McGuinty.”

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Martel:** Stick with me, Carol.

“‘Tory leadership candidates Ernie Eves and Chris Stockwell may want to raise taxes by charging families an additional \$1,000 a year for health care. I do not,’ McGuinty said today.

“‘Families are already paying for health care with their taxes. Pay more for health care, pay twice for health care, but get less health care—that's the Tory plan. It's certainly not the Liberal plan....

“‘If Eves were Premier, you'd pay at least three times: with your taxes, with your premiums, and, if you have the cash, out of your pocket to get premium service,’ he said.

“‘Instead of looking for ways to make Ontarians pay more, we must look for better ways to invest the precious dollars Ontarians already give us, so they get improved health care.’”

That's what the Premier promised before the election. Then after the election, in the first budget, he turns around and he whacks modest- and middle-income Ontarians with a brand new health tax that is horribly regressive, that is now bringing in \$2.4 billion to the Ontario treasury. And you know what? Ontarians are paying three times, just like Dalton McGuinty said before the election. They are paying for health care out of their general taxes, they are paying for health care with the new tax that the McGuinty Liberals whacked them with, and they are paying out of their own pockets for important health care services that this government delisted, like chiropractic services and eye exams. And if you're some of those cancer patients who were in the gallery last Thursday, then you're really paying out of your own pocket because you're trying to get life-saving cancer drugs in the United States at \$15,000 a pop for one month's treatment. For Erbitux, that is six months' worth of treatment.

So Dalton McGuinty was absolutely right: People pay enough for health care. Now they're paying three times, just like he said they wouldn't before the election, when he promised that he wouldn't bring in a health tax.

Not only did the McGuinty Liberals break their promise on the health tax, they've done nothing in a subsequent budget to try and deal with how horribly regressive it really is. Let me give you some examples. For someone who is making \$30,000 a year, that individual is now paying an astounding 24% more in provincial income tax just to pay for the health tax alone. Someone who makes \$200,000 a year pays only 3% more. So the wealthiest Ontarians just keep reaping the financial benefit of the 35% tax cuts for individuals first brought in by the Conservatives and kept in place by the Liberals.

Let me give you an example about how else these same folks at the top of the income scale continue to benefit. An individual with an income of \$100,000 got a 35% tax cut from the former Conservative government and another 18% tax cut from the federal Liberals. That's a combined tax gift of \$9,600. An individual with an income of \$125,000 got tax cuts of 30% from the



Conservatives and 16% from the federal Liberals. That's a combined tax gift of \$11,500. But modest- and middle-income Ontarians who got whacked by the health tax got the following: A couple making \$49,000 each will pay a staggering \$1,200 in new health taxes. Someone who has an income of \$125,000 pays only \$900. Where's the fairness in that? What happened to the promise made by Dalton McGuinty in 2002 that he would not charge families an additional \$1,000 a year in a health tax? On the contrary, he's charging some of these families \$1,200 a year in a new health tax in the province of Ontario.

I would have thought that, over and above breaking their promise, which is something the Liberals should be ashamed about, they would at least, in this budget, try to do something about how horribly regressive the health tax is. But no; this government continues to rake in \$2.4 billion from the health tax, primarily off the backs of modest- and middle-income families, who could ill afford it.

Let's talk about some of these families, because this is a promise that was made by the Liberals during the last election to June Callwood and Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld for the Campaign Against Child Poverty. This is a letter that Dalton McGuinty sent to the Campaign Against Child Poverty dated July 31, 2003. Mr. McGuinty promised the following:

"Second, my team and I oppose the Conservative government's practice of clawing back the national child benefit ... a practice we will end during our first mandate."

He went on to say in the questionnaire from the same group, the Campaign Against Child Poverty:

"We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. The clawback is wrong and we will end it. The Harris-Eves government has reinforced the cycle of poverty, not broken it."

I can tell you that the McGuinty Liberal government has reinforced the cycle of poverty in Ontario, not broken it either, because what did this government do after they were elected? Did they fully end the clawback like they promised? No, they did not. All they did—the small, inconsequential, pitiful change that this government made for the poorest families in the province of Ontario—was to give them the inflation amount from the clawback. You see, every year the federal government gives 2% or 3% as an increase to the benefit itself, and it's that 2% to 3% increase—not the benefit itself, just the minor increase—that families in Ontario are getting right now. Do you know what that works out to be? For a family with one child, the increase amounts to \$48 a year—a far cry from the \$1,511 in benefits that would go to low-income families not on social assistance.

1740

It is a shame and it is shameful, first of all, that Mr. McGuinty could make that promise and then not deliver, but also that what the government would do instead was to give these families the most minuscule, minimal amount of money that they could possibly get, that is, the inflationary increase on the benefit itself. Families in

Ontario—the poorest families, the families on the lowest income—deserve to get this federal funding transferred to them. Talk about a gap in transfers. Isn't that the cruellest gap that we see in the province, when money in the federal government that should go to the poorest families, those on social assistance in this province, is instead clawed back by this government? No change on that horrible policy in this budget or in the budget bill that's before us.

This government also promised families, particularly those that need access to high-quality, regulated, non-profit child care, that they were going to put an additional \$300 million into child care in the province of Ontario. The Liberal government was very critical of the former Conservative government for not investing provincial dollars into child care. Well, we've gone through two budgets now, and I can tell you that this Liberal government has not lived up to its promise on child care either. This Liberal government, through two budgets, has yet to announce or flow 300 million new dollars of provincial money for child care in the province of Ontario. I can tell you that their Best Start program has ground to a halt because the funding, even though funding is coming from the feds, isn't enough to make a significant difference.

We have thousands and thousands and thousands of families where Mom and Dad are both in the workforce, who desperately need access to safe, regulated, high-quality child care and who cannot afford to pay for it. Child care in this province has become a luxury for modest- and middle-income families. Only those who are on a subsidy can get child care, and there are still long waiting lists for subsidies in many cities, Toronto included. Those who have the wherewithal, the financial means to pay, can also access it.

We need to recognize in this province that high-quality, regulated child care is a fundamental component of early childhood development, and we should be doing like Quebec does, which is to significantly increase the provincial budget, as Quebec did several years ago, to ensure that families who needed affordable child care could access it. What did we get in this budget? I regret to say that in this budget, just like the last, there's another broken Liberal promise, this time with respect to child care. There has been no provincial money provided to child care under the Liberals since they were elected—none; nada. If this government truly cared about kids, if this government was interested in living up to the promise made with the Best Start program, then this government would provide \$300 million like you promised for child care in the province of Ontario. That might actually start to make a difference for so many Ontario families who need access to high-quality, regulated child care for their children.

Finally, in the about six minutes that I have remaining—because I'm not going to do questions or comments, I'll just tell you; I'm just going to go until 10 to 6—I will focus again on autism. I focused on this in the speech that I made last week, but I want to return to it, because two weeks from today this Ontario government,



this Liberal McGuinty government, will be back in court trying to overturn a wonderful decision that was made by Justice Kiteley, and released at the end of March, 2005, with respect to autistic children in the province of Ontario. The Ontario government will be there again, contrary to the promise that their Premier made during the last election, using taxpayers' dollars—yours and mine—to fund the lawyers and fight these families instead of actually providing the IBI treatment that they promised during the last election.

It's worth reading into the record again the promise that was so clearly made by Dalton McGuinty during the 2003 election campaign, when he wrote to Nancy Morrison of Bradford, whose son Sean at the time was five—he has autism—and said the following: "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six. We are not at all confident that the Harris-Eves Conservatives care to devise any innovative solution for autistic children over six—especially those with best outcome possibilities that might potentially be helped within the school system with specially trained EAs." Signed by Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party.

What happened after the Liberals were elected? After the Liberals were elected, the same discriminatory policy against autistic children over the age of six, begun by the Conservatives, was continued under the Liberals. Many of those parents who thought the Liberals were going to be different and who voted for them on the basis of this promise on autism got the shock of their lives when, as their daughter or son turned six, they were cut off government-funded IBI, just like the Conservatives used to do before.

Not only did the government not change the discrimination against autistic children like Dalton McGuinty promised, but this government continued to fight these families just as aggressively in court and just as aggressively at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal as the Conservatives ever did.

I was very pleased when Justice Kiteley ruled at the end of March, in a fabulous document that said the following. These are a summary of her rulings:

"I have found that the defendant"—that is, the government—"has violated the s. 15(1) rights of the infant plaintiffs on the basis of age with respect to the IEIP and on the basis of disability with respect to special education programs and services;..." and that this violation "was not justified under s. 1 of the charter...."

"With respect to the violations of the s. 15 rights of the infant plaintiffs [I am granting] declaratory relief and damages for past and future IBI/ABA, subject to proof by each family."

In short, she made it very clear that this government is violating the constitutional rights of these children on the basis of their age and their disability, and that the Minister of Education himself is violating the Education Act because he fails on an ongoing basis to provide the

services that autistic children need in school so they can learn. Let me quote what she specifically says about the Minister of Education on page 9 of her decision:

"Furthermore, the Minister of Education failed to fulfill the statutory duty to 'ensure that appropriate special education programs and special education services' were available to all exceptional pupils without payment of fees. In particular, the Minister of Education failed to develop policy and give direction to school boards to ensure that ABA/IBI services are provided to children of compulsory school age. Indeed, the actions and inactions of the Ministry of Education and the minister created a policy barrier to the availability of IBI/ABA in schools. The absence of ABI/IBI means that children with autism are excluded from the opportunity to access learning with the consequential deprivation of skills, the likelihood of isolation from society and the loss of the ability to exercise the rights and freedoms to which all Canadians are entitled."

Madam Justice Kiteley ruled in favour of the plaintiffs and told the government to do what the government promised in the last election it would do; that is, extend IBI/ABA to children over the age of six and ensure that that extension included the school system so that these kids could have their therapist in school so they could learn.

As I conclude, it is an absolute disgrace that two weeks from today, this government is going to go back to court and try to appeal the ruling of Justice Kiteley, a ruling which, as I've said earlier, would put into effect, put into force, the very promise that Dalton McGuinty made to all of these parents before the last election. That was to extend IBI to autistic children over the age of six and to ensure it was in the school system so that they could actually have an ability to learn.

I say to the government, shame on you for not living up to this promise, and shame on you for going back into court two weeks from now to waste more of my money and other taxpayers' money to fight these parents rather than giving their children the IBI treatment that you promised in the last election. I hope the court rules against you again.

It is a disgrace that so much time and so much money will be spent when you guys should just live up to the promise you made, do the right thing and extend IBI to all of those autistic children over six who need it, when they need it, including in the school system.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to an order of the House dated November 17, 2005, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Bradley has moved third reading of Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. I remind members that this will be a five-minute bell.

I beg your attention. I've been handed by the chief government whip a note: "Pursuant to standing order

28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Minister Bradley for third reading of Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures, be deferred until deferred votes, Tuesday, November 22, 2005.”

It being approaching 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Tuesday, November 22.

*The House adjourned at 1752.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
19	942	2	40-43	word of our civil service: “I have reviewed the scoring for each competition to confirm that they received the highest score from an arm’s-length panel for each contract they received.” I think the Leader of the Opposition



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**Tuesday 22 November 2005**

**Mardi 22 novembre 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 22 November 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 22 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** I rise today to express the serious concerns of the people of Whitby-Ajax, and indeed of all of Durham region, about yesterday's large layoff announcement at General Motors in Oshawa. Many people and their families will be affected negatively, not only those employed directly at General Motors but also those in the related parts and service industries.

On their behalf, in 2002-03, as minister responsible for economic development, I worked for Ontario to resurrect the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council to develop an auto strategy for Ontario and Canada. This was accomplished successfully with the co-operation of industry leaders, including Michael Grimaldi of GM and Buzz Hargrove of the CAW. The strategy called for the federal and provincial governments to invest in skills training, research and innovation, and infrastructure.

In research and innovation we have the Beacon project going ahead at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, in co-operation and partnership with General Motors. Now we need some urgent action on skills training at Durham College in Whitby, which needs to expand, and at our other skills training facilities in Ontario. In infrastructure we must move urgently, particularly at our border facilities in Windsor and Fort Erie, and I urge the government to do that; and the expansion of the 407 east, urgently, to serve General Motors in Oshawa. These projects are essential for the auto sector east of Toronto, and I urge the government, on behalf of my constituents, to act.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** It seems that every week, as regular as a Schwartzwald cuckoo clock, we can count on a security breach at one of our financial institutions, where thousands of our private financial records are stolen. I'm speaking of identity theft, the quickest-rising crime in North America.

While I applaud the Minister of Government Services on his public awareness campaign on how to guard against identity theft, we must give those financial insti-

tutions and credit reporting agencies notice that if a personal credit record has been stolen or even compromised, the affected consumer must be notified—no ifs and no buts. How else can we protect ourselves? How else can we be more vigilant?

A recent survey by First Data Corp. found that 6.8% of adults have been victimized by identity theft and a striking 43.4% have been contacted by scam artists trying to get personal financial information. It gets worse: Most of our financial institutions had security breaches, and Equifax credit reporting agency had 2,400 files stolen. These incidents are only the tip of the iceberg.

What should we do? Our government was on the right track to consider my private member's Bill 174, which passed second reading unanimously on March 3. It died in the last session of Parliament. When it is resurrected, I hope I can count on all of your support.

#### GREATER TORONTO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I rise in the House today because I'm still upset with the response from the Premier yesterday. Members will be aware that transportation congestion in Toronto is costing the economy an additional \$1.8 billion per year. These are jobs, Mr. Speaker. Gridlock hurts the economy, our environment, our health and indeed the very quality of life we enjoy.

Yesterday at Queen's Park, we heard GTA business leaders call for immediate action. The Toronto Board of Trade, along with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and other boards of trade and chambers across the GTA and Hamilton, have asked for the creation of a Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. Unlike this government, Ontario business leaders and municipal leaders understand that you need to have a plan if you want to ease gridlock.

However, establishing a GTA transportation authority takes leadership, and therein lies the question. We might expect that this would be something for the Premier to lead. However, his recent decision to avoid gridlock by catching an airplane from Toronto to Hamilton, a distance of 70 kilometres, shows he's simply out of touch with this, and indeed many, issues.

So, Premier, who is going to take the lead? In my view, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority should not be led by any single municipality, nor should it become just another government bureaucracy. The leadership needs to come from all stakeholders who understand the problem and how to bring about solutions.

I urge this government to take its election promise seriously and work with business and municipal leaders, and indeed with all citizens of the GTA, to resolve gridlock by using the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

#### EVENTS IN BRANT

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I'm pleased to rise today to tell all members of this House about the good things happening in Brantford and Brant county. In Places to Grow, the riding of Brant is identified as a growth node, and we are ready.

Business has recognized what we have to offer. The Ferraro Group is investing \$150 million to build a new plant. This plant will hire 600 new skilled employees when it opens. More exciting are phases 2 and 3. When—not if—these phases are completed, the job total will rise to 1,300 jobs. Mohawk College and Laurier University, along with the province, will work with business to offer courses to develop a workforce that meets the skills that our industries need.

Brownfield areas are ripe for redevelopment. I will continue to push for even more action on this file for the future. The riding and the province of Ontario recognize that we are on the cusp of a boom. The Oak Park interchange is an integral part of this boom, and it is ready for realignment. I'm proud to have taken the leading role I have taken to bring the two sides—the city and the province—together and the private sector. I continue to encourage all the partners to work co-operatively to get this interchange signed off on and shovels in the ground.

I am also convinced that, again working co-operatively, we will have a family health team in Brant and a CHC in Brantford to meet the health care needs of my constituents.

Finally, I am pleased to say that today a new YMCA will officially open to our citizens. I invite all my colleagues to visit. As Walter Gretzky says, it's the centre of the universe.

1340

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** After being missing in action over the summer, we've recently heard considerable noise from the McGuinty Liberals in response to gun crime in Toronto. Mr. McGuinty and his Attorney General have attempted to portray themselves as law-and-order advocates, but even a cursory look at what they've done since assuming office and what they plan to do over the next few years tells the real story.

We know that, overwhelmingly, the gun violence now plaguing Toronto primarily involves young offenders. One of the first things the McGuinty Liberals did upon taking office was close down Project Turnaround, a strict-discipline facility that had an impressive record of turning young lives around. They followed up the closure

with a transfer of violent young offenders from the corrections ministry to a children's ministry. We know that under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, supported by the McGuinty Liberals, serious youth criminal acts such as car theft do not result in charges—give Johnny a warning letter. Also, this spring's budget indicated a \$300-million cut to the justice ministries, reductions that have serious implications for public safety.

The Liberal government's attempt to portray themselves as law-and-order advocates is a charade, a public relations exercise that gives political expediency and cost-cutting the priority over community safety. That, as Paul Harvey would say, is "the rest of the story."

#### NATIONAL HOUSING DAY

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** Today is National Housing Day. I had the pleasure this morning at the Home Depot store in my riding of Toronto–Danforth of helping to launch this year's toque campaign, put on by Raising the Roof. This is something they've been doing for nine years now. I wanted to tell everybody here about it, because it is an opportunity for all of us to go out and, for just 10 bucks, buy a really warm toque.

You can go into any Home Depot in your own riding across the country and buy a toque. You can get it in fabulous red, which I know the Liberals will like, or your basic classic black, and it will keep you very warm, especially for those politicians and their supporters who might be out on the hustings in the near future.

I want to say that this is an important campaign. They're hoping to raise \$750,000 by the campaign's end on February 28. The Raising the Roof national day is Toque Tuesday on February 7, 2006. They want to raise this money to help homeless people and organizations who advocate for them across the country. They are the only national charity doing this, and it's important to support them. I would ask all members to go and put down their \$10 and buy themselves either a classic black toque or a nice red one.

#### ELECTRICITY GENERATION

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** I am so pleased to rise today to speak about another positive government announcement. Yesterday, the Minister of Energy announced nine clean, renewable energy projects that will provide 975 megawatts of energy.

Three companies in my riding of Huron–Bruce signed agreements for a total of 434 megawatts. The four projects are the Kingsbridge II wind power project in Goderich, 158 megawatts; Enbridge leader wind project A in Kincardine for 100 megawatts; Enbridge leader wind project B in Kincardine for 99 megawatts; and Ripley wind power project, 76 megawatts.

I can tell you that this is good news not only for Huron–Bruce but for our rural communities around the province of Ontario. We can harvest the wind, and we can harvest our fields. This is a good announcement for rural communities.



**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Members' statements. The member for York West.

### YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are ahead of the game.

I am proud and delighted to have here today in the members' gallery at Queen's Park two very special young leaders from the riding of York West. I would like to welcome Jamal Clarke and Amanda Parris, who are here from the Friends in Trouble Youth Initiative. These movers and shakers have demonstrated that adversity proves a person's mettle. They are actively involved in a project in the York West riding which seeks to help teens break the cycle of violence, manage anger, teach youth how to have healthy relationships with others and help instill life skills which help our youth succeed.

I am also proud to say that our government has endeavoured to give our young people as many choices as possible with our flourishing youth apprenticeship program, and helping to keep them safe in schools with our innovative bullying prevention strategy.

Faced with increased gun violence on our streets, the government introduced a weapons enforcement unit, the guns and gangs task force, the gun amnesty program, the mandatory gunshot wound reporting bill, increased border security, the hiring of 1,000 more police officers and the summer jobs and PEACE programs.

I am confident that with the proper coaching our young people will make the right decisions in governing their lives—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge):** I know I speak for every member on this side of the House when I express my concern for the families affected by General Motors' announcement yesterday of some 30,000 job cuts across North America.

It has been widely acknowledged that Ontario's record of productivity, its publicly funded health care system and its highly skilled workers helped to minimize what could have been an even harsher blow to the auto sector, yet we are still troubled by the cutbacks earmarked for GM's Oshawa and St. Catharines operations. My thoughts today are certainly with the workers and their families who may be affected and the suppliers that support the assembly function that may also be affected.

As a government, we will maintain our determination to seek out new auto investment in Ontario. We have helped to secure over \$5 billion in new auto sector investments in Ontario so far, and we have a responsibility to all Ontarians to continue to aggressively pursue even more new investment. Ontario is one of North America's leaders in the auto industry, and we'll do our part to keep Ontario where it rightly belongs: as leader of the pack.

Yesterday, Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove spoke of the Premier's vision and foresight,

saying, "He's the first Premier that really understands the auto industry." Last year, when we made a record \$500-million investment in the auto strategy, Hargrove said, "This strategy ... is going to be good for Ontario.... This is a positive and welcome change from previous governments who took our sector for granted, when other jurisdictions were stepping up to attract investment and jobs that we want for Ontario."

### VISITORS

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I wish to inform the House that the family of one of our pages, Cameron McLean, has joined us today. Cameron's parents, John and Joyce, and Cameron's brothers, Stuart and Andrew McLean, are here in the gallery, and I'd like to extend a warm welcome to them from the Ontario Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Welcome, and that is not a point of order.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX ARCHIVES

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 34, An Act to proclaim Archives Awareness Week / Projet de loi 34, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation aux archives.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for Durham may have a brief statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Ontario has a rich and colourful recorded history. Archives play an essential role in the preservation and use of that history. By acquiring, preserving and making available documented material from all aspects of society, archives promote the heritage of this great province. This bill proclaims the first Monday of April each year as Archives Awareness Week.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT (HARASSMENT), 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL (HARCÈLEMENT)

Ms. Churley moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 35, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers from harassment in the workplace / Projet de loi 35, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail pour protéger les travailleurs contre le harcèlement dans le lieu de travail.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for Toronto–Danforth may have a brief statement.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** I'm reintroducing this bill in light of the tragic murder of Lori Dupont. I introduced a similar bill or the same bill in the last session after the horrible death of Theresa Vince in the workplace in 1996. Hopefully a bill like this would help prevent those deaths from happening.

It amends the Occupational Health And Safety Act to require employers to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, to give workers the right to refuse to work in certain circumstances after harassment has occurred, to require an investigation of allegations of workplace-related harassment and to require employers to take steps to prevent further occurrences of workplace-related harassment. I do hope that all members in the House will support quick passage of this bill for obvious reasons.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 22, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1352 to 1357.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter

Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley  
Murdoch, Bill

Prue, Michael

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 70; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### BIRTH CERTIFICATES

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I would like to tell the members about an innovative new service for consumers applying for a birth certificate from the Office of the Registrar General. I announced this service at an event earlier today.

A few weeks ago, I gave the members some background on the service challenges at the ORG. I told the House and the public what has been done to date and what other actions are being undertaken to help fix the problems. Today's announcement is another step in our plan to modernize government. Our goal is to set a new standard of excellence in delivering services to the public.

I am pleased to say that our government has introduced a money-back guarantee for on-line birth certificates.

This guarantee means that anyone who applies for their birth certificate on-line will get their certificate delivered to them within 15 business days or they will get their money back. Anyone born in Ontario can now apply on-line for a birth certificate and get it within 15 working days. Whether they are new parents seeking a birth certificate for their baby or an adult seeking a replacement certificate, the guarantee still applies. In order to qualify for the service guarantee, the birth must already be registered with the province and the information provided must be complete and accurate. The service guarantee does not apply to on-line applications, of course, that contain errors.

The people of Ontario have busy schedules. This quick and easy application will help eliminate unnecessary delays for birth certificates.

Since June, the on-line application has been available to parents of children eight years and younger. The Office of the Registrar General has received more than 45,000 applications on-line, and about 99.7% of eligible applications have been processed and delivered within 15 business days. This has been a huge success.

As of today, we are officially extending the on-line service and the money-back guarantee to all consumers born in Ontario. We have received excellent feedback from the consumers using the application: 97% of the

### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Bradley, James J.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Flaherty, Jim  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoy, Pat  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Klees, Frank  
Kular, Kuldip  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Mauro, Bill  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Mossop, Jennifer F.  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John  
Oraziotti, David  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Parsons, Ernie  
Patten, Richard  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry

Qaadri, Shafiq  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Scott, Laurie  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sorbara, Gregory S.  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Takhara, Harinder S.  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tory, John  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wong, Tony C.



people find the application easy to find, use and understand. All consumers have to do is to go to the ServiceOntario Web site at [www.serviceontario.ca](http://www.serviceontario.ca).

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I'm going to write that down.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Write that down. In just a series of steps, they can complete the on-line application at their convenience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Within 15 days, their birth certificate will be at their doorstep.

We believe this is the first public service guarantee of its kind in North America. This desktop-to-doorstep guarantee is something we plan to extend to a wide range of on-line government services.

While this initiative is just one way we are making government services surprisingly simple, I want to assure the Legislature and the people of Ontario that we will ensure the safety and security of their private information. The Office of the Registrar General has security measures in place that are more extensive than any other Canadian jurisdiction. These security measures are built on recommendations from a number of third-party experts. These include the OPP, the Vital Statistics Council of Canada, former RCMP Commissioner Norman Inskter and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The on-line application uses secure Web technology similar to on-line banking. It has undergone rigorous testing, including a review by external IT security experts, and is regularly monitored to ensure security and that personal information is protected.

We also continue to require guarantors for subjects over the age of eight. Ontario is one of only two provinces with this additional security requirement.

After all, protecting the privacy of personal information is one of my ministry's key priorities. This is just one more way we are fulfilling our commitment to both service excellence and smart security.

In the future, we plan to extend service guarantees to a range of on-line services for other areas of government. Ontarians want and deserve better service, and through Service Ontario, we are making it happen.

## SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

### FONDS POUR SPORTS ET LOISIRS

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):** Last Friday, I was pleased to be joined by two federal cabinet ministers, the Honourable Stephen Owen, Minister of State (Sport), and the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of State (Public Health). We were pleased to announce, at the Boys and Girls Club in Ottawa West-Nepean, the Sport for More program, a bilateral agreement between our government and the federal government, totalling \$6.1 million over four years to support grassroots sports participation initiatives across Ontario.

This agreement is proof positive that the Premier's campaign to the federal government for fiscal fairness is

resulting in better agreements for all Ontarians. This agreement means that over the next year, \$1.3 million in total funds will go to provincial level not-for-profit organizations for sport participation initiatives among underrepresented groups. Additionally, over the same period, \$500,000 will go to aboriginal groups.

So far, project proposals from two organizations, the Metis Nation of Ontario and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Ontario, have been approved for funding under this program. There are an additional 31 proposals for funding from 30 organizations currently being reviewed.

La diversité des projets proposés par ces organisations fera en sorte que plus d'Ontariens de tous les horizons participeront plus souvent à des activités sportives de qualité, selon leur niveau, leurs capacités et la façon dont ils voudront y participer.

The initiatives under this program are aimed at encouraging regular physical activity among young people, developing provincial athletes, improving the quality of coaching and increasing leadership skills within the aboriginal community through aboriginal sports programs. Aboriginal communities across the province currently lack affordable and accessible opportunities to participate in sport and recreation. This agreement will include specific initiatives to increase the participation of aboriginal communities across Ontario in sport activities.

In addition to this agreement, our government's investment in amateur sport will total \$12.62 million for fiscal year 2006-07.

Recent estimates indicate that sedentary living costs our health care system approximately \$1.8 billion every year. Childhood obesity is on the rise, and many Ontarians still lack the opportunities or skills to be full participants in sport and physical activity. We are in the midst, sadly, of an epidemic of unhealthy weights. Almost 50% of Ontario adults and 15% to 20% of Ontario youth are overweight or obese.

Les membres du gouvernement McGuinty, les citoyens, ainsi que les intervenants du domaine des sports et de l'activité physique de partout dans la province expriment leurs préoccupations croissantes en ce qui a trait au niveau trop peu élevé d'activité physique et de pratique des sports.

There are numerous benefits associated with habitual physical activity and sport participation. These include increased longevity, psychological well-being, promotion of pro-social behaviours, improved social cohesion, increased labour force productivity and higher student achievement. Research findings have also established strong links between sport participation and physical activity and the prevention and management of certain chronic diseases such as colon cancer, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and depression. Although there are numerous documented benefits associated with leading an active lifestyle, the current rate of participation in sport and physical activity prevents us from fully realizing these benefits.

That's why our government introduced the Sport for More program as part of a comprehensive new strategy to

increase participation in sport and physical activity throughout Ontario.

This bilateral agreement—I was pleased to be joined by some grade 6 students from Our Lady of Fatima school in my riding—is just a start. The statistics I briefly outlined earlier show that even more needs to be done to support amateur sport and physical fitness in Ontario, and I'm committed to bolstering our commitment to young athletes.

As the Ministry of Health Promotion delivers on its commitments, the people of Ontario can take comfort in the knowledge that their government is working hard with them to grow a generation of active children and youth, enable adults to promote healthy lives for themselves and their families, and empower older people to age in good health.

1410

### BIRTH CERTIFICATES

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford):** I'm certainly pleased to respond to the minister on the introduction of this guarantee. He says that on the government Web site there are some terms and conditions applied for this service, and I guess the devil is in the fine print, because as to the service guarantee terms and conditions, there are 14 of them. I would call them basic loopholes for the government to get out of their guarantee.

Here's condition (2): "The application must be complete and accurate. If the ORG contacts you (by mail or phone) to complete processing of your application, you are not eligible for a refund"—if they contact you, you're not eligible. Condition (4): "You must be eligible to receive the requested document(s)." Well, what does that mean? You have to be eligible. Next is number (8): "The delivery date is the date on which the courier first attempts to deliver the document(s) to the address provided on the application. If no one is present to sign for the delivery, the courier will leave a delivery notice providing further pickup or delivery options. The service guarantee does not apply if you decline the delivery." The biggest kicker is number (13): "A request for a refund must be made no later than 30 days after your certificate(s) are delivered to you."

So the onus is on the applicant, not on the government. Where is the government accountability in these terms and conditions?

The other part of the statement, which the minister doesn't even address, is the security measures. I put order paper question 38 a number of weeks ago for the minister to "explain what security measures and procedures will be utilized to prevent identity theft in the on-line application for all birth certificates, both children and adult." At this time, I haven't received a response to that order paper question.

Also, the service guarantee does not apply to birth certificate applications arising from a name change or correcting errors to your first or last name on your existing birth certificate. Minister, you are going to have to look at extending the service, because there are a lot of

errors out there caused by your ministry with respect to existing birth certificates, and you haven't done that.

But I guess the fundamental question that has to be answered on this is, if you get your money back, do you have to reapply to get your birth certificate?

### SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** I was listening on the radio in Ottawa last week when the minister was making his announcement at the Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa. The comment by the announcer was that some of the kids were putting the basketball in the hoop, but the minister was having great difficulty in doing that.

This announcement makes one very wary about this whole new ministry, because I'm not sure this is about health promotion. I think it may be about Liberal government promotion. This announcement amounts to \$1.5 million in total, federal plus provincial, per year. That amounts to a provincial contribution of five cents a head per population in all of the province of Ontario for health promotion to help groups promote physical education. We already have an organization, the Trillium Foundation, a non-partisan foundation, that does this kind of work. What this government has shown in the past is that they've cut back the money out of the Trillium Foundation, and now they're using it for health promotion.

I read a press release today: "Health Promotion Minister Jim Watson says he likes the idea of 'using a carrot instead of a stick' to encourage people to join health clubs, ride bicycles or buy other fitness equipment.

"Watson will travel to 10 cities in January to get feedback on ideas such as eliminating the provincial sales tax on gym memberships and bicycle helmets.

"But Dalton McGuinty says Ontario can't afford the ideas Watson will be looking into."

Why are we doing this? Why is Mr. Watson spending the taxpayers' money to go around all over Ontario to consult with people about ideas that the Premier has put the nix to already? We have a health promotion ministry to promote the provincial Liberal government. This isn't about improving the health of the people of Ontario; this is about improving the health and the perception of the Liberal government of Ontario.

### BIRTH CERTIFICATES

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** There was some, albeit muted, excitement amongst New Democrats at the prospect of an announcement today by the Minister of Government Services. We thought the government might sweeten the deal: perhaps, in addition to your money back, a coupon for \$10 off your next driver's licence renewal or a certificate for a 15% reduction in your 407 fees or, at the very least, a set of steak knives. But what we got today is a rather embarrassing, rehearsed, recycled reannouncement of what the minister somehow felt compelled to say but a couple of weeks ago.



Look, the problem is with the problem cases. The fact is that name change applications have not been speeded up in any way, shape or form, and those piles are lingering for months and years at your ministry and within the office of your Registrar General. The fact is that corrections to defective birth certificates or defective legislation, which are sometimes discovered only many, many years after the fact, are still lingering in your Registrar General's office for months and years. The issue is all about staffing. It's all about stability of that staffing, adequacy of that staffing, training of that staffing, and your failure to acknowledge that that ministry and that Registrar General's office remain gutted of an adequate staffing level. That should have been the real announcement today.

But I've got to tell you, Minister, the phones calls in our constituency office yesterday and today—although frequently in the past they have been about inadequacies in your ministry and the Office of the Registrar General—have not been focused on lengthy waits for birth certificates. The folks calling my office down in Welland and calling other MPPs' offices are the spouses of GM workers who know that their jobs are going to be not just taken away from them but are going to be lost to the community forever. The phone calls received in our constituency offices over here in this caucus are phone calls of desperation by people because their jobs have been taken away in the course of this orgy of job loss during the Dalton McGuinty government's term—over 42,000 manufacturing jobs. Their concern is there may be no doorstep left to leave that birth certificate on when it's delivered by the courier.

I say to you, sir, that this government's failure to recognize, acknowledge and respond to the crisis around the significant job loss, around the significant loss of value-added manufacturing jobs and the serious loss of wealth-creation jobs should be a source of shame and embarrassment.

#### SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the Minister of Health Promotion, I want to talk about the complete inability of children from families on social assistance or families who are working poor to ever be able to access community-based sport organizations, and I doubt the announcement that was made by the minister today is going to change that one bit.

The fact is that the fees alone that are associated with many community-based organized sports are far beyond the reach of even modest-income families, never mind the working poor or those on social assistance. Take a look at hockey, which is played in communities big and small right across this province. I'm telling you that the fees alone associated with hockey, even house league, are totally beyond the reach of working poor families or kids on social assistance. By God, if you have a child who's actually talented enough to be on a select team, that child could never imagine the possibility of having an opportunity to play on that team, because his or her parents

will never be able to afford the equipment, never mind the fees associated with that. There's nothing in the minister's announcement today that's going to change any of that.

With respect to aboriginal communities, the real issue is, does the aboriginal community in question even have the infrastructure necessary to have sports and recreation? The community of Martin Falls has a half-built arena. They came to this government over 18 months ago. They met with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and asked for provincial funding so they could finish the arena, so they could actually give sporting opportunities to kids in their reserve—nothing from this government two years later: no money, no arena. How is this money going to help people in Martin Falls or any other aboriginal community that doesn't even have the necessary infrastructure?

Do you want to make some change? End the clawback so poor families can enjoy organized sports. Stop the win tax so that aboriginal communities can pay for this. Finally, why don't you put some—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005

##### SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures / Projet de loi 197, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1421 to 1426.*

**The Speaker:** Mr. Bradley has moved third reading of Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Kular, Kuldeep	Racco, Mario G.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Meilleur, Madeleine	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Oraziotti, David	Wong, Tony C.
Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve	
Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed would please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Barrett, Toby  
Bisson, Gilles  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Churley, Marilyn  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Flaherty, Jim  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Horwath, Andrea

Hudak, Tim  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm  
Munro, Julia  
Murdoch, Bill

O'Toole, John  
Prue, Michael  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Scott, Laurie  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tory, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 61; the nays are 27.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### LAYOFFS

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. While literally thousands of men and women left their jobs yesterday in Oshawa and St. Catharines with an uncertain future, you downplayed the 3,660 job losses at GM and said the job losses were “a little bit of contraction.” Automotive analysts today say that between 15,000 and 21,000 spinoff jobs will also be lost as a result of the GM layoffs. In fact, in May 2002, you said, “I’m sure you will understand, Premier, that when an assembly plant is shut down, the parts plants are sure to follow.”

Premier, your “Don’t worry. Be happy” approach to manufacturing job losses across Ontario is no comfort to the families involved or to the communities devastated by these layoffs. After yesterday’s overwhelming understatements on your part, you gave yourself a general shake this morning. Can I ask you now what specific measures you propose to take to give some sense of relief and hope to these communities and these families affected by these layoffs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** It didn’t take the leader of the official opposition that long to assume an all-too-traditional role, unfortunately, for the Leader of the Opposition, which is one of a very bleak outlook on the world around us.

I want to quote Gerry Fedchun of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Association.

#### Interjections.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I know that the members opposite will be very much interested in hearing this. They don’t like the news of 214,000 net new jobs during the course of the past two years. That seems to rile them unduly, but perhaps they’ll listen to what Gerry Fedchun, head of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Asso-

ciation, said yesterday: “It’s not all doom and gloom. Canada’s still doing reasonably well. We’ve still got a good percentage of the assembly business in North America, and we’ll continue to have a pretty good percentage of business.”

**Mr. Tory:** The problem is, on account of the kinds of answers you gave yesterday, it is necessary for somebody to come here and speak on behalf of people who actually find their circumstances a little bit bleak. They’re looking for some sense of hope, maybe, coming from you, as the leader of the government, when they’ve just been told that they’ve lost their jobs.

Now, this morning, 550 employees at the Cascades coated paper plant in Thunder Bay were devastated by news that their plant will be shut down completely, just in time for Christmas. The company says that high energy costs in northern Ontario are largely to blame. This will be yet another body blow to Thunder Bay.

Premier, again, your “Don’t worry. Be happy” approach to these layoffs is no consolation to these families being affected. What exact measures—including perhaps some of the measures so far, the many recommendations of your own council report that you’ve ignored—do you intend to take to help Thunder Bay, to help these communities and to help these people who are losing their jobs?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It is indeed interesting and heartwarming to hear from this new-found champion of the working people. Let me tell you about something that one Mr. John Tory said as president and CEO of Rogers. In 2001, you see, he laid off 170 people; in 2002, he laid off 187 people; in 2003, he laid off 175 people. When he was asked about it—Speaker, I know you’ll be interested in hearing this—he said, “It’s a sign of the times. Most businesses today are finding that they have to reduce their costs and that includes, unfortunately, people costs.” Again, I wonder where it is that we have suddenly found this newly discovered champion of the working people.

**Mr. Tory:** That is a pathetic abdication of your responsibility as Premier of this province.

Premier, the Prescott Shirt Company announced it is closing. The maker of Hathaway shirts will leave over 60 people out of work, just in time for Christmas. The company started this year, on your watch, with 125 employees.

In the town of Campbellford in the riding of Northumberland, they were hit with terrible news two weeks ago. One of the town’s largest employers, the World’s Finest Chocolate factory, is closing and moving jobs to the United States; 125 employees will be laid off on your watch.

Premier, these are jobs that are affecting real people, real families across the province. To say to them, “Don’t worry; be happy,” to say that kind of thing is not good enough. They need to see you in their corner to give them some reason to be optimistic. What exact measures are you prepared to take to help the families in Campbellford, Prescott, Thunder Bay, Oshawa and St. Catharines? Specifically, what are you prepared to do about it?



**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The 214,000 net new jobs—our biggest responsibility on this side of the House is to lay the foundation in this economy for new jobs to be created, and that's what we're doing. I know they don't like to hear it on that side of the House, but we believe 214,000 net new jobs to be somewhat meaningful.

In September, 17,300 new jobs were created. In October, 21,200 new jobs were created. De Beers is moving ahead in their next phase of a new diamond mine in northern Ontario. That is a potential \$1-billion investment. It will create 600 construction jobs and 375 jobs during production. GlaxoSmithKline: a \$23-million expansion that secures 75 new jobs. The Automodular Corp. is building a new plant in Oakville for 400 new jobs. Stream, a voice over Internet protocol company, is adding 700 full-time new jobs. In my home town of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you, Premier.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Timmins–James Bay. New question.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question again is to the Premier. Can you detail for the House today exactly what measures you are prepared to undertake immediately to ensure that patients are not left to literally wait until it's too late in the emergency rooms of this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Health, Speaker.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The first thing I would say to the honourable member whose name bears the name of a party that took 7,110 beds out of circulation in the Ontario health care system is that the question might better be posed to the person who sits beside you. After all, it was she for three years as Minister of Health in this province who poured hundreds of millions of dollars into hospitals and produced very little, to the point where it was said by her one day: "In meeting with our stakeholders, no one can quite identify the reason for the problem."

I believe the reason for the problem can be found in the reduction of beds at the same time that there was no investment in community-based care. Accordingly, in addition to the \$2.35 billion that we've invested in our hospitals since coming to office, we have made the largest single increases in community-based care, to the point where we're seeing at hospitals like Credit Valley in Mississauga, in a high-growth area, a level of emergency room visits that is in decline. That's a message that our efforts to build community-based care and primary care are working for patients, and we will continue along this path.

**Mr. Tory:** I've been to a good number of those emergency rooms, and they're saying that the decisions that

are taken, that have been taken on your watch, by you and by the McGuinty government, are responsible for the backlog we see today.

According to a recent CIHI report on ER wait times, patients in Ontario are having to wait, in some cases, hours to see a doctor, when they should be seeing one in minutes. This is a report written by an objective organization. Physicians working in our ERs are asking the Ombudsman—they've now gone to the Ombudsman—to investigate why this is the case.

We've seen the story of a man who arrived at a hospital with chest pains. He was determined to have a life-threatening condition and should have been seen within 15 minutes, according to your standards. In fact, he waited one hour and 40 minutes and suffered a heart attack in the process.

Premier, your government and you have had very little to say about what specifically you are doing in the places where there are still problems; one of them I've just mentioned. What is your plan to deal with the places that have these kinds of unacceptable waits that don't meet the standards you have adopted?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's very interesting that an honourable member who has a policy platform on the record of reducing health care spending by \$2.4 billion has the gall to ask questions about this. It's astonishing. When will this member stand in his place and tell the people of the province of Ontario how things are going to get better when you cut \$2.4 billion out of health care spending, as is your stated goal and plan, sir?

1440

With respect to the initiatives that were undertaken related to emergency rooms, in addition to providing care for people in more appropriate settings and diverting from the emergency room those people who are better treated elsewhere, we are working with the Ontario Medical Association. These doctors who are here today at the press conference are a separate organization. We are in the midst, in the province of Ontario, of having emergency room doctors sign an alternate funding agreement. This is money that is on the table to enhance the number of doctors working in our emergency rooms. Three quarters of the hospitals in the province of Ontario and the emergency room doctors there, through the OMA, have signed it; several of the representatives of the group that you stood beside today have not. This is evidence—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** Well, whatever it is you're doing, it's not working. According to the ER doctors filing a complaint with the Ombudsman—they've tried dealing with you; they're now filing a complaint with the Ombudsman—our emergency rooms in this province cannot meet the standards that your government has accepted. The Coalition of Ontario Physicians in Emergency, the group filing the complaint, have said that those patients requiring emergent care ought to see a doctor within 15 minutes. That's a standard you accepted. Patients are waiting

30 minutes in the province of Ontario. Those requiring urgent care ought to see a doctor within 30 minutes. Here in your McGuinty-Smitherman Ontario, they are waiting 60 minutes. These are real doctors, and real people who are waiting to be seen with real problems in these emergency rooms.

Are you prepared to stand in your place today and give us a guarantee that the standards you've bought into, the standards your government has bought into, will be met? It's fine to guarantee a birth certificate. Will you guarantee that people who are seriously ill will have the standard met that you have guaranteed them in this province?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's very interesting that when given an opportunity, this honourable member won't stand in his place and tell us what the standards are going to be when you reduce \$2.4 billion from health care spending in this province. You have some obligation, sir, to come clean on that. You have not yet, and all Ontarians await your transparency on the commitment that you've made.

Our government has invested \$2.35 billion in hospitals. In addition, we've spent more money on community-based care, to the point where we have hospitals in this province that are seeing lower numbers of people seeking care in emergency rooms.

This is the party that closed 28 hospitals and 7,200 hospital beds, and promises to cut \$2.4 billion from health care. That is your plan, sir; ours is different. We work with our partner, the Ontario Medical Association. We make the payment of emergency room doctors a priority in our agreement. We work with doctors in emergency rooms across Ontario to sign an alternate funding agreement. And some doctors, a small group, come forward today with a different organization and a different viewpoint. We will consider—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### LAYOFFS

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I have a question for the Premier. Yesterday, General Motors swung the axe and cut 3,900 auto assembly jobs in Oshawa and St. Catharines. Your response was incredible. You said it's "a little bit of contraction." For 3,900 GM workers and their families losing their jobs, for thousands of other workers in the auto parts sector and for yet thousands of other workers who are employed in spinoff jobs, this isn't a little bit of contraction; this is a crisis. Maybe you can tell them, Premier, when did this become just "a little bit of contraction" for the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I can say with all objectivity that never has the Ontario auto worker had a greater champion than they have found in this government and our determination to grow this sector and create new jobs—never.

We've had a very aggressive auto plan that's been in place for a long time now, and I'm proud to say that On-

tario is competing and Ontario is winning. We've secured \$4.5 billion in new investment, and then yesterday, DaimlerChrysler announced another investment of \$750 million; GM announced an investment of \$400 million. We're up to \$5.7 billion in new investment.

The member opposite may not like to hear these things, but those are the facts. Toyota's new plant alone will create some 1,300 direct jobs. Thousands of other spinoffs will also be created as a result of that new investment alone. When it comes to the CAMI plant, that new investment will create 1,000 jobs both at Ingersoll and Oshawa.

I can say again: Never has the Ontario auto worker had a stronger champion than they're finding—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Never has Ontario lost so many auto assembly jobs on a permanent basis in this province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Order. Leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, we saw recently how you flew to China to flog Ontario's tobacco, and we saw this weekend how you flew from Toronto to Hamilton to attend a Liberal fundraiser. Can you tell us, have you flown to Detroit, to the GM headquarters, to fight for the 3,900 jobs at Oshawa and St. Catharines? Have you flown to General Motors headquarters to fight for the auto parts jobs that are being lost? Have you flown to GM headquarters in Detroit to fight for the thousands of spinoff jobs that are being lost? Have you done any of that, Premier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I have done that; I've done that and a lot more. While the leader of the NDP is mired in intractable pessimism, we are very optimistic about the future of the auto sector in Ontario. To quote Buzz Hargrove, CAW president, "We have almost three years to work on it. So that gives me some comfort. We have some time."

I'm telling you, our responsibility right now is to work with Ontario auto workers, to work with GM, whether here in Canada or south of the border, and ensure that we have, in time for the 2008 planned closure, a new line working hard on a brand new product. We've got the workers in this province, who are the most productive in North America, we've got a medicare advantage and we've got a government that is committed to—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Here's what the thousands of General Motors workers see: You boasting about your accomplishments in the auto sector while they get pink slips. That's what they see.

Premier, not long ago you boasted about your \$100-million contribution to Ford, yet we know that Ford is also prepared to make an announcement about cutting thousands of jobs. Can you tell us, when you made that \$100-million contribution to Ford, did you get an ironclad clause that says they won't be laying off thousands more workers in Ontario?



**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Just so I understand this, is the leader of the NDP actually saying that we should not partner with auto companies, that we should not work together to strengthen our auto sector, that we should not do everything we can to create new, high-paying jobs in Ontario for auto workers? Because I differ with him significantly in that regard.

We have a plan in place. It has secured \$5.7 billion worth of new investment. We see great things in the future for the auto sector. We will continue to work with the auto workers. The member opposite may not be prepared to work with Buzz Hargrove. I can say that on this side of the House we are more than willing to do that and to ensure we have a strong, vibrant, robust auto sector long into the future.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. New question. The leader of the third party.

1450

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** If you're going to boast about hundreds of millions of dollars for GM and Ford, thousands of Ontario workers shouldn't be losing their jobs, Premier.

To the Premier: I want to ask you about the 500 workers who have now lost their jobs through the closure of the Cascades paper mill in Thunder Bay. You see, Premier, this is a paper mill that's closing after you announced your much-vaunted, much-boasted-about strategy to help save the pulp and paper industry. Obviously, this company doesn't think much of your so-called loan guarantees. It doesn't think much of the photo ops and the announcements you've held already; otherwise, they wouldn't be putting 500 workers out of work just after Christmas.

Premier, can you tell those 500 workers, is your government prepared to do anything to ensure that their jobs are maintained, that they can continue to contribute to society and contribute to the community of Thunder Bay, or are you just going to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** The question has been asked. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** The Minister of Natural Resources, I know, met with representatives of the head office, in Montreal, of this company. There was an article that appeared in the Chronicle Journal that talked about a statement made by one of the workers at the plant in Thunder Bay. The worker said, in reference to the employer, "You and your company have chosen to not modernize the plant. What do you expect when productivity lags because old machinery is constantly breaking down?"

Our plan is open and available, and we have yet to receive an application from this particular company. But we have a plan in place. We've made \$150 million available, and it's designed specifically to upgrade tech-

nology, to ensure that we put the plants on a more sustainable footing by increasing the value-added component of their product and enhancing productivity. The plan stands. We are more than prepared to work with this company and any other company that feels they are up against it and are unable to make the necessary investments. We're prepared to work with them, to partner with them to ensure that we have a vibrant and sustainable—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, I too read the press release from the company. They're moving the production and they're moving their jobs to a mill in Quebec. Why? They're very clear. Because in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, electricity rates have been driven so high they can't afford to pay them in comparison to electricity rates in Quebec, and the cost of delivered wood fibre in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario has been driven so high that they can't afford that either. Premier, what they want to know, and what thousands of other workers across northern Ontario want to know, is when is the McGuinty government going to realize that if you drive electricity prices to the point where they are double or triple the electricity prices in other pulp and paper jurisdictions, mills will close here? When is the McGuinty government going to realize that, and when are you going to do something about it?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I would strongly recommend to my friend opposite that he actually get his hands on the press release that was issued today so he could better understand the reasons behind this closure. I will cite some of those for him. The company specifically talks about the "current economic situation within the pulp and paper industry." It talks about "recent sales price decrease in the fine papers sector." It talks about "reduced demand." It talks about "increased price of raw material." It talks about these being in combination with "an increase of the Canadian dollar compared to the US dollar." Yes, there is a reference to energy as well, but there are a number of factors, just in case the member opposite was somewhat remiss in leaving the impression that somehow energy was the only factor. In fact, there are six all told. We have lost plants in BC. We have lost plants in the Maritimes. We have lost plants in Quebec.

We have stepped up to the plate with a \$680-million strategy that is designed to support the forestry sector. We are more than willing to work with any partner that's prepared to make the necessary efforts—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, I have read the press release. You quote the American dollar. In 1993, when this mill was successfully repositioned and the jobs sustained, the American dollar was even lower in value than it is today. In fact, paper prices in 1993, when this mill was successfully repositioned, were even worse then. Do you know what has changed, Premier? What has changed is this: You've got the McGuinty government hell-bent to drive the price of electricity through the roof, so that pulp and paper companies can't afford to stay in Ontario, so that companies like Dofasco, a leading steel company, are

telling you you're going to kill jobs there, so that even General Motors this past summer told you that you have doubled their hydro bill over what it was two years ago.

Premier, this is your government and your government alone. You're driving the price of electricity through the roof, you're driving the cost of wood fibre through the roof and you're driving these companies and these jobs out of Ontario. When are you going to—

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The leader of the NDP is riding this poor, feeble, one-trick electricity pony into the ground. If it snows later this afternoon, it somehow is going to be connected with electricity prices in the province of Ontario.

They lost 14 mills in northern Ontario on their watch. When the leader of the NDP was in cabinet, the number of people in northwestern Ontario employed in the forestry, mining and oil and gas industries collapsed from 11,700 to 6,600. In northeastern Ontario, the number of people working in the forestry, mining and oil and gas industries plummeted from 27,700 to 21,700 between 1990 and 1995.

We've stepped up to the plate. We've got a great plan, a \$680-million strategy. We're prepared to work with any plant, any company that's prepared to make the effort and prepared to make the investment in improving the quality of their plants.

## VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. In looking at the things you can do to show some leadership and some urgency on the gun crime epidemic in the Toronto area, people in the communities affected, people across the community, are repeatedly saying that they want to see people working together: governments, community leaders, political parties, police forces and so on.

We've seen some areas of law enforcement in which there has been great operational co-operation—child pornography and white-collar crime, to name only two. Recognizing we have some joint effort taking place in this area because of the guns and gangs task force, are you willing to consider expanding that model by putting someone in place in co-operation with the federal government, with the municipalities, with all of the police forces involved to launch an all-out crusade on this epidemic of gun crime in Toronto? Are you prepared to consider that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** I know that the leader of the official opposition will recall the statements I made yesterday and the invitation I've extended to representatives of the police and the judiciary to meet with our Attorney General and possibly to have representation there from our crown attorneys as well. The purpose of that meeting is to review the initiatives that have been made by each of us separately to determine whether or not there is more that we might do together to be more

effective in terms of addressing the guns and gangs issue, especially here in the city of Toronto. I think that is very much in keeping with the spirit of the suggestion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** It's always nice when you comment on the spirit of the suggestion I put forward. I had a specific idea I put forward, on which you didn't comment at all. But anyway, let's move on to another topic, same subject.

Last week, in dealing with a notice of dissatisfaction I filed in respect of a non-answer from the Attorney General, the member for Willowdale said, "The crown does not support three-for-one credit"—this is in pretrial sentencing—"as a general policy." It's the last few words I want to focus on—"as a general policy"—because there's always a loophole. This kind of language clearly leaves open the kind of deal-making in our justice system which has eroded public confidence and made a farce of sentencing decisions, especially for gun crimes. I hear that over and over again, as I'm sure all members of this House do.

Are you and your Attorney General prepared to tell his crowns they cannot propose or agree to these get-out-of-jail-free deals—no ifs, ands or buts—and that you're going to take the reforms necessary to give people comfort that the justice system is working for them?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I know that the leader of the official opposition will also be familiar with the policy put forward by the Attorney General providing as much of a directive as he might to crown attorneys here in Ontario with respect to dealing away gun charges. He will also be aware that we have been pressing the federal government, as has he, with respect to ensuring that we have tough laws on the books with respect to any crime involving any use of a gun, and the federal government has made a commitment in that regard of late.

But beyond all of that, beyond all these separate and individual initiatives advanced by various levels of government, I think the next best step that we might take is to bring people together to review those steps to see if there's anything that we might do further, either separately or collectively, to ensure that we have safer streets, especially here in the city of Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question.

1500

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. When I asked you yesterday why your government wasn't treating the issue of gun violence on the streets of Toronto more urgently, you said that your government was. You said that you now have 50 new crown attorneys in place under the guns and gangs task force. But we listened to your Attorney General, who said, "No, there aren't 50; there are only 32, and only 24 of them are in fact working on the task force."

Premier, who, between you and your Attorney General, is mistaken about these important issues?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The Attorney General is always right.



**Mr. Hampton:** The problem here is that young people are dying while you and your Attorney General can't get the numbers straight. You also said that there are 34 new judges. Well, Premier, we checked that as well: As far as we can determine, your government has only appointed 15 new judges, and none of those new judges has been appointed since this gun violence started breaking out on the streets of Toronto.

I ask you again, Premier: Were you mistaken in what you said on that issue again yesterday?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** With respect to the crown attorneys, 32 are specifically hired to deal with the new gangs and gangs task force. With respect to judges, I'm advised that there are in fact 39 on the job.

I can tell the member opposite that we are working as quickly as we can, as hard as we can, to ensure that we have the necessary crowns in place and the necessary judges in place to attack this problem of crime in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Today is National Housing Day, and on a day such as this I think it's important for Ontarians to understand a major difference between our Premier and the opposition leader.

In a recent interview, John Tory had this to say about affordable housing: "The government should not be in the housing business, except, perhaps, for people who are sort of mentally disabled or addicts, like assisted housing where you have special housing and so on. But the government, you know, they shouldn't build or operate housing, in my view, because it's just not what government's good at. And I'm just being straightforward with you. That's my view."

I'm sure we all appreciate Mr. Tory's honesty. Thankfully, Premier McGuinty and our party hold a different view. We believe that the role of assisting Ontario's most vulnerable citizens in finding a place to call home is an important one for our government to play.

Minister, can you tell me what action our government has taken since our election to provide affordable housing for Ontarians?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I certainly would like to thank the member for his question. I know that he's a great advocate for social housing in the Peterborough area.

As he well knows, for the first time in almost a generation—at least in the eight years that the Tories were in office—earlier this year, this government signed an agreement with the federal government in which we matched the dollars for affordable housing that the federal government had put forward some two or three years ago in the amount of \$301 million. We also put \$50 billion aside as part of our strong communities rent supplement program, and of course there's the rent bank of \$10 million, which is to help individuals who are involved in emergency situations and need help with a

month or two of rent when they are involved in those kinds of situations.

We're also very pleased with the pilot project, which was quite successful here in Toronto, that gave the opportunity for 400 families to get safe and affordable housing.

**Mr. Leal:** I'm pleased to hear from the Minister that indeed our government is back into affordable housing in a meaningful and significant way after the previous government did absolutely nothing.

Since our election, we've broken ground and completed a number of projects across Ontario in communities such as Waterloo, Guelph, Hamilton, Brantford, Vaughan, Peterborough and Kingston. I also understand that new, affordable homeownership units are being built in Markham, Pickering and Scarborough. Specifically, Minister, can you tell us, through this government's enhancement improvements to the affordable housing agreement, how many units are now under construction and development, and how many units are now complete and occupied by Ontario families who desperately need affordable housing?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I'm sure the member realizes, and all the members realize, that it takes a while to get the housing programs up and running, to get the necessary approvals from the municipalities to get the zoning in line. But I can tell him that, so far, \$85.7 million has actually been spent and 983 units have been completed in some 20 projects throughout the province. Most of these are occupied right now. Another 800 are under construction, and another 2,300 are currently under development.

I should also tell you that in the new affordable housing program that we announced earlier this fall, all 47 service managers have submitted an expression of interest to get involved with both the housing allowance program, which will create some 5,000 units, and the 5,000 units of affordable housing. We have some work to do, but we believe we're on the right track. If there are any projects that are immediately ready to go, they will be eligible under the strong start program, which was allocated about \$25 million. Ontario is back in the housing business.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Doctors in this province are becoming increasingly concerned about the inability of your government to respond to patient needs. Earlier this week, the OMA said in a press release, "Physician Resource Crisis Continues to Deepen in Ontario," and today, the emergency room doctors told us that worsening wait times in emergency rooms are contributing to more adverse patient outcomes and more suffering and pain as patients wait longer.

Minister, will you at least acknowledge, as these doctors have indicated today, that emergency room wait times are worsening. Will you also, as they have asked, work with health professionals to create a sustainable plan to reduce wait times for patients in this province?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Well, holy moly, Mr. Speaker—is that OK?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The first thing I want to ask is why that honourable member, who is part of a party that's a proponent for a \$2.4-billion cut to health care, won't stand in her place and acknowledge it.

You want to pretend that you guys aren't part of that connection to Mike Harris, but we see lots of evidence every day that that continues: no honesty in terms of the decisions made by the previous government to reduce by almost 7,200 the number of beds in health care. That occurred on your watch, when you were a minister of the crown.

You ask me to stand in my place and acknowledge something that can't be proven. In fact, I'm the only one who has offered any statistic today, and that's about the declining number of people who are seeking care in the Credit Valley Hospital emergency room in a high-growth part of our province. We've made a \$2.35-billion investment.

Yes, we have challenges in our emergency rooms. This is a long-standing challenge in the Ontario health care system. It's been here for decades, and we're going to work on solutions that are different from the one the honourable member tried, which was to pour hundreds of millions of dollars down the drain and get no result for it whatsoever.

**Mrs. Witmer:** I don't believe that people in this province who are waiting in emergency rooms are very impressed with your response or your lack of compassion or understanding. We actually launched the most comprehensive emergency room strategy in Canada in 1998 and we increased the capacity in our emergency rooms.

We have heard from the emergency room physicians. They came here today because they're concerned for their patients. They say there's an immediate need for resources—for beds and for nurses—and they're saying that your decision to force hospitals to balance their budgets is forcing hospitals to lay off nurses and close beds. I am asking you today, Minister, will you guarantee today, particularly with flu season upon us, that no more nurses are laid off and no more beds are closed in our hospitals?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I think this honourable member should be ashamed. I don't say this lightly. She talks about her program in 1998, this fantastic ED program. Here's what she said about its effect two years after:

"In meeting with our stakeholders, no one can quite identify the reason for the problem. It seems that at certain times in the day and on certain days there are more people who are presenting themselves at the emergency room door.... No one quite understands why, at certain times, there seems to be a tremendous pressure." That was September 28, 2000.

1510

At the same time, the government she was so proud to be part of was just wrapping up closing 28 hospitals and

7,200 hospital beds in this province. Contrast that with a \$2.35-billion investment: ED alternate funding arrangement for emergency room doctors—more money for them, more resources; 3,000 new nurses; 69 family health teams; 39 new community health centres; a 13% investment in community care last year alone. This is a government investing across the breadth of health care and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** Premier, today I reintroduced my bill to make sexual harassment a charge under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I introduced it last fall. It was allowed to die on the order paper. Experts say that had such legislation been enforced, it could have helped to prevent the murder of Lori Dupont, the nurse and single mother who, tragically, was stabbed at her workplace by a co-worker whom she feared.

Premier, there is evidence now, and there has been for some years, that this type of legislation can save lives. In light of that, will you pass it today?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation):** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour):** Once again, on behalf of the government, we send our condolences to the family of the nurse.

I think it's important to realize that, as the Ministry of Labour, we are waiting for notification of the completion of the police investigation and a coroner's report that is going to be completed. I think it's appropriate in those circumstances, since there are two ongoing investigations, that we need to wait and see what the results of those are and what recommendations may be forthcoming.

Certainly, as a government, we do not tolerate violence in the workplace. We encourage employers in this province to review the practices and procedures that they have in place, to ensure that they have good policies in place to prevent workplace harassment.

**Ms. Churley:** Making sexual harassment a charge under the Occupational Health and Safety Act has been called for for a long time. It was called for after Theresa Vince was murdered in the workplace in 1996.

Last year, the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children and the Ontario Federation of Labour again called for such reform. Your caucus colleague Pat Hoy presented a private member's bill when he and you were in opposition that is very similar to what I have introduced now. Had Pat's bill or mine been acted on, Lori Dupont's life might have been saved.

Premier, will you pass this legislation before you today to prevent another woman's murder in the workplace because of sexual harassment?

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** Again, I reiterate that, as a government—and I think every one of us in this chamber—we do not tolerate workplace violence. Again, we ask that



employers review the procedures that they have in place. I think it's important to recognize that we are going to be hiring an additional 69 health and safety inspectors. Certainly as those inspectors come on the job, one of our focuses is going to be in our health care sector.

But for the member to know as well, I have asked my ministry staff to look at other jurisdictions. You've cited Quebec as an example. Most provinces in Canada right now are undertaking a comprehensive review of this issue. I have asked my staff to look at what other jurisdictions are doing.

Specifically on the Windsor situation, since there are the police investigation and a coroner's investigation, it would be inappropriate to comment on that. But we are prepared to look at this issue because, again, workplace violence shall not be tolerated.

## IMMIGRANT SERVICES

### SERVICES AUX IMMIGRANTS

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

This province is dependent on the skills new Ontarians bring with them as they settle in our province. Unfortunately, the process of becoming part of our communities has traditionally not been easy, with cultural and language barriers impeding their ability to truly feel part of our provincial landscape.

Yesterday, you signed an historic agreement with the federal government that will increase federal funding for Ontario's newcomers, and for that I congratulate you and the Premier. Minister, can you tell us why this agreement is so important and what this money will do to reverse the trend of difficulty faced by Ontario's new arrivals?

**Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'd like to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh for his question. I would like to say to him that, due to the persistence of the Premier in insisting that the federal government fund newcomer settlement fairly in Ontario, and after 20 years of trying, the government of Ontario has finally gotten the federal government to invest in Ontario's newcomer settlement programs. That's after government after government either wasn't interested or didn't succeed. Our Premier succeeded in getting that money. That's \$920 million invested in these newcomer settlement programs that will go directly to the integration of our newcomers to overcome barriers. Those are programs that are going to mean more success. It is also going to mean more success for Ontario's economy. That's what the Premier has achieved. That's what the NDP does not support. That money is for Ontario.

**Mr. Brownell:** Thank you, Minister. I know that this government appreciates the contributions of our immigrant population.

Once they have settled into their new communities, the next big hurdle many face is mastering one of the two

official languages. Comme j'essaie maintenant d'améliorer mon français et d'apprendre un peu de mohawk, je connais bien la difficulté d'apprendre une nouvelle langue.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Brownell:** That's my contribution.

Minister, although many consider English to be the major tongue for much of western and northern Ontario, French is equally important in the east of the province, in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. For many new arrivals to be able to participate fully in our communities, they must have the opportunity to learn this language as well. Can you tell us how this new funding will ensure that Ontarians receive proper training in both English and French?

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** This investment of \$920 million will ensure that there are more robust English-as-a-second-language programs and French-as-a-second-language programs that will meet not only basic English or French needs, but the English or French they need to achieve success in their jobs. Whether they be in business or whether they be in the field of science, it will be career-based English or French.

And let me say: ce nouveau financement va nous permettre d'offrir plus de classes de formation linguistique aux nouveaux Ontariens, à plus de niveaux. Les nouveaux arrivants pourront ainsi apprendre la langue de leur profession, qu'ils travaillent dans la technologie ou dans les affaires commerciales.

This is going to finally—

*Applause.*

**Hon. Mr. Colle:** It would have been easier in Italian. But I would say this is about investing in our francophone communities. This is investing in the capacity to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. New question.

## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** My question today is for the Minister of Education. Last year I stood up with the member from Simcoe North and asked you to resolve a transportation issue affecting students and families in the Carden-Dalton areas of my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. I told you then about the approximately 150 students in these former townships who for generations have taken their elementary and secondary school education with the Simcoe County District School Board. Many of them have travelled and are in the galleries today.

Minister, a year has passed, and still your government has not found a way to resolve this issue. The local municipalities, student councils and myself believe it is time to put politics second and students first. Surely these students and families have a right to expect a decision. When are you going to make that decision?

1520

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I hope that the member opposite has spoken a little more

frankly to the people in the gallery about her own position. Last year, she came to us, and I have a letter here from the director of education that says, "As a direct result of the intervention from the minister, Gerard Kennedy, we have provided transportation that will gain time for the two boards to resolve" this issue. We resolved this problem once.

This is a local school board issue. At that time, I found the member opposite was in favour. There are 89 children in one board; 69 children in another board.

The member opposite, in her supplementary, I'm sure, will stand up and say what solution she advocates, because some are advocating a boundary change; many who have written to me want it to be left the same. For me, this is clearly an issue to have the local boards resolve, but I ask the member opposite to express in her supplementary what she wants done in that area. Does she want her residents moved outside of her area, and give up on them, or does she want to hang on to them and have another solution in mind? I look forward to seeing the solution she has.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Minister, today we have in the gallery, all around us, from Carden and Dalton, parents and students who have had to live with this uncertainty for the last two years. They have travelled here today to ask you to permanently find a solution so that the children of Carden and Dalton can attend Simcoe county schools. Those are the same schools that the Ministry of Education has funded in the past with major expansions. They are also the schools that the Carden and Dalton families have attended for the last 50 years.

Minister, please provide a decision today. Please put these students first. Please tell this House and these people who are visiting us here today what you plan to do to resolve this situation permanently.

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Again, each of the local members, and I appreciate this very much, has written, and they were responded to. We helped the local boards in an intervention to make sure that transportation was sustained.

I want to say very clearly: We do expect, on behalf of any of the families that are affected, certainty from the education system. We are paying for the transportation of children who may have to go to school in another place, but as far as we're concerned, the dollars are being provided.

I would say this, because the government opposite was always blaming school boards and so on: We are looking forward to the boards finding a resolution. If the boards cannot find a resolution, we will move with mediation, with other assistance to find a resolution, because we have 90 students on the one hand that are being educated in one county; 70 students on the other hand.

The local members have no idea what they want done about it. We ourselves at the province will work with the boards. We will get an equitable solution, and we will

take this anxiety off of the backs of families, where it doesn't belong.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to Minister of Health. The Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors today confirmed what I've said for many months now: that most of the funding you've announced for long-term care has not gone to direct services for residents in our homes who need those services. OANHSS said: "What you find is that most of this increased funding has not been allocated to direct care and services. In fact, only about a third of the total announced increases can be legitimately described as enhancing care."

Minister, during the election your government promised to provide an additional \$6,000 in care for every resident in long-term-care homes. When are you going to deliver on that promise?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Using the honourable member's logic, when you open a new bed in extended care, you haven't enhanced care for the people of the province of Ontario. This is the math that that member, who was not so good at it during her days in government, likes—

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** George, do you have to put everybody down?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Why don't you get another question, Elizabeth, please?

The circumstances that we're dealing with in 2005-06 include, in the long-term-care homes program budget, an investment increase of \$264 million. Part and parcel of that, and this evidence has been presented to the honourable member in response to an FOI request, indicates that, of the commitment to hire 2,000 new staff, by surveying, 1,627 full-time equivalents have been hired to date.

In addition, we've got new regs in 2005 for 24/7 RN coverage and an extension of the number of baths per week. We've increased the comfort allowance for the first time in 20 years. All of these things cost money, and all of them are about enhancements to care for the people of the province of Ontario.

**Ms. Martel:** It wasn't only OANHSS that was here today to express concerns about the lack of adequate funding for residents in long-term-care homes. They were joined by the Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities, Ontario Association of Residents' Councils, Ontario Society of Senior Citizens' Organizations and the United Senior Citizens of Ontario. All of these organizations were here today to make it clear that despite the election promise of the McGuinty Liberal government to increase funding per resident in every home by \$6,000, in fact this government has only increased funding by \$2,000 for every resident in this province. The result is that residents are receiving about two hours of hands-on care a day when they need at least three, there are not enough personal support workers to meet needs, the staff can't



provide the rehabilitation that's needed and only a fraction of residents who need mental health services are receiving them. I ask you again, Minister, on behalf of all of these organizations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Response, the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I appreciated the honourable member's question, particularly the acknowledgement of the efforts and the progress that we have made toward putting more resources to enhance the care in our long-term-care homes. We're the first to acknowledge many accounts—this is not the only one today—of organizations that have come forward indicating that several hundred million additional dollars would do the trick just nicely. This, of course, is the challenge that we grapple with.

Accordingly, our commitments have included a \$264-million enhancement to the funding on long-term care this year. I think that speaks as a pretty good example of the progress we're making. In addition, we've moved forward with freezing resident co-payment fees. This creates more cash on hand for residents in these homes. This is an additional cost of \$72.8 million. We supported family and resident councils, tougher compliance and enforcement, a 1-800 action line and a public reporting Web site. The point is that on a variety of files in health care, there's more work to do. There's also ample evidence that we've done quite—

**The Speaker:** New question.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** My riding of London-Fanshawe is home to many students and young people looking for ways to improve their quality of life and the quality and variety of work experience in the future. One of the ways young people in my riding are able to gain knowledge and learn new skills is through apprenticeships. There is a great need and a great demand for more apprenticeships in Ontario. I have had many people ask me when the government would move forward on the creation of an apprenticeship program. We are all aware of the need for more apprenticeships across the province, and many in my riding are hoping to get an apprenticeship in their field of interest.

Today there was an announcement made by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities regarding the Ontario youth apprenticeship program. My question for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is how his announcement today will affect my constituents, who are hoping—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'd like to thank the member from London-Fanshawe for his advocacy on behalf of the young people in the riding.

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** That's absolutely right. He has been a passionate advocate for opportunities for all young people, particularly those who might be interested

in the trades. He's correct in saying that the Ontario youth apprenticeship program is a marvellous opportunity for trades.

Today, I had the opportunity to announce an additional \$1.25 million for OYAP this year. What does that mean? That means another almost \$60,000 to the Thames Valley board, and London-Fanshawe will benefit. It means an additional 1,500 students are going to have the opportunity for the youth apprenticeship program this year. It means greater exposure to apprenticeships. It means a brighter future—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Ramal:** I am happy to hear the minister's response. This is going to be a great investment for people in my riding and across the province. I believe there will be many in my constituency who will be able to apply for this program, and I will be more than happy to help them in their search for new skills and knowledge.

Minister, I am happy that the government is keeping skills training and apprenticeship a high priority, but I imagine that this is not the only initiative taken by your ministry to improve and advance skills training and apprenticeship. Could you tell me what other initiatives have been taken to improve skills and training in Ontario?

1530

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** You know, there's so much to say in so little time, but I'll make an effort.

In addition to OYAP for young people, just a few weeks ago, we announced a co-op diploma program extension, which will provide 1,000 students with the opportunity to get both the beginnings of an apprenticeship and a college diploma. What a great opportunity that is. In addition, a program for 100 youth at risk through five different programs. We have more good news to come, because we have pre-apprenticeship programs, an expansion to our apprenticeship training.

I know you want to hear more, but we have to save some time. I'd like to thank the member for London-Fanshawe for all his hard advocacy on this issue.

#### PETITIONS

##### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas students of (the former) Carden and Dalton townships are entitled to accommodation in and transportation provided to Simcoe county schools, yet now are being treated as out-of-area students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Transportation is provided immediately to all students of Carden and Dalton townships from their homes/previously established bus stops to the most appropriate schools within the Simcoe County District School Board boundary;

"(2) Modify the Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB)/Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) boundary to include (the majority of) Carden and Dalton townships within the Simcoe county boundary. Such boundary change is implemented prior to December 31, 2005."

It is signed by hundreds of parents from my riding. Mr. Kennedy, I hope you're listening.

**Interjection:** He's not.

**Ms. Scott:** He's not.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I hope that everyone can hear me. My voice is a little better today.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It read as follows:

"Whereas property assessment now occurs to an annual basis;

"Whereas the Mike Harris government created the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to deflect criticism of property assessment methodology from the province;

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government promised to create a fair and equitable system of assessment; and

"Whereas property values are not related to the cost of municipal services nor to the ability of taxpayers to pay,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately create a new system of property assessment that provides property and business owners with fair and equitable assessments that are stable and transparent that a property owner will clearly be able to understand."

I'm in agreement and affix my signature thereto.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario sent to me by a group of residents of Brampton and Georgetown. It deals with access to trades and professions for newcomers to Canada, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario enjoys the continuing benefit of the contributions of men and women who choose to leave their country of origin in order to settle in Canada, raise their families, educate their children and pursue their livelihoods and careers; and

"Whereas newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in Ontario find frequent and unnecessary obstacles that prevent skilled tradespeople, professional and managerial talent from practising the professions, trades and occupations for which they have been trained in their country of origin; and

"Whereas Ontario, its businesses, its people and its institutions badly need the professional, managerial and technical skills that many newcomers to Canada have and want to use;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the other institutions and agencies of and within the government of Ontario, undertake specific and proactive measures to work with the bodies regulating access to Ontario's professions, trades and other occupations in order that newcomers to Canada gain fair, timely and cost-effective access to certification and other measures that facilitate the entry, or re-entry, of skilled workers and professionals trained outside Canada into the Canadian workforce."

I agree with this petition. I'm going to affix my signature to it and ask the page, Richard, to carry it for me.

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas students of (the former) Carden and Dalton townships are entitled to accommodation in and transportation provided to Simcoe county schools, yet now are being treated as out-of-area students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Transportation is provided immediately to all students of Carden and Dalton townships from their homes/previously established bus stops to the most appropriate schools within the Simcoe County District School Board boundary;

"(2) Modify the Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB)/Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) boundary to include (the majority of) Carden and Dalton townships within the Simcoe county boundary. Such boundary change is implemented prior to December 31, 2005."

On behalf of all these folks who have signed this, I'm pleased to sign it as well.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to



receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

It has been signed by many of my constituents, and I affix my own name and submit it.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that was delivered to me by Roxanna Spruyt-Rocks of the Independent Living Residences for the Deafblind in Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have two petitions today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We are” requesting “that all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist or medical doctor be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan.

“Diabetes costs Canadian taxpayers \$13 billion a year and increasing! It is the leading cause of death and hospitalization in Canada. Many people with diabetes cannot afford the ongoing expense of managing the disease. They cut corners to save money. They rip test strips in half, cut down on the number of times they test their blood and even reuse lancets and needles. These cost-saving measures often have tumultuous and disastrous health consequences. Persons with diabetes need and deserve financial assistance to cope with the escalating cost of managing diabetes.

“We think it is in all Ontario’s and the government’s best interest to support diabetics with the supplies that each individual needs to obtain optimum glucose control. Good blood glucose control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50%, blindness by 76%, nerve damage by 60%, cardiac disease by 35% and even amputations. Just think of how many dollars can be saved by the Ministry of Health if diabetics had a chance to gain optimum glucose control.”

I affix my signature to it.

1540

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here that is similar to the ones being read. It’s such an important issue on behalf of my constituents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with it.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** My petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reads:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I support the intent of this petition, and I will sign my signature to it.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound):** I must say at the start that I’m really pleased to see that the Treasurer, Mr. Dwight Duncan, is here to listen to this petition, because I know he is very interested and is probably going to look after it. It’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I've also signed this.

#### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I've got a petition to rescind the joint board decision of June 8, 2005, approving the applications of Dufferin Aggregates to extend its mining licence in the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"There are numerous reasons for rescinding the joint board decision including the following:

"Whereas the decision contravenes the purpose of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act;

"Whereas the decision sets precedent for quarry expansion licences on the Niagara Escarpment;

"Whereas this decision could lead to habitat destruction for species of concern;

"Whereas escarpment rural lands are equivalent to buffer designation under the United Nations' framework for biosphere reserve...;

"Whereas to attempt to maintain the significant wetlands and the streams course water will have to be pumped in perpetuity;

"Whereas this decision allows for pumping 50 feet ... below the water table;

"Whereas the 50-foot dams to be constructed have a potential for failure;

"Whereas aggregate can be readily accessed close to market off the Niagara Escarpment in land that is not protected or at risk;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the government of Ontario to:

Issue an order by the Lieutenant Governor in Council ... rescinding the decision made by the joint board dated June 8, 2005, approving the applications of Dufferin Aggregates in regards to this matter;

Issue an order by the cabinet substituting for the decision of the board on this matter, a decision rejecting the applications of Dufferin."

#### CANCER CARE

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

"Whereas people of all ages with cancer have the right to seek treatment in their own area without the added trauma and obstacles imposed by having to travel great distances while unwell; and

"Whereas the citizens of Barrie and Innisfil"—and Bradford West Gwillimbury—"have shown their good faith and continue to fundraise for their share of the cost for the development of a regional cancer centre, enabling area patients to receive their life-saving treatment close to home, near their family and friends; and

"Whereas the building of a regional cancer care centre will remove the barrier for area patients to receive their life-saving treatment close to home;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to provide the approvals and funding necessary to commence construction of the Royal Victoria Hospital cancer care centre."

I affix my signature.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Portuguese Canadians number 171,545 in the Toronto census metropolitan area, many of whom encounter serious barriers (language, culture and location) to accessing community and long-term-care services; and

"There are no long-term-care homes dedicated to the needs of Portuguese Canadian seniors; and

"Camões House for the Aged and Portuguese Community Centre of Toronto is proposing a partnership with a local long-term-care provider to purchase up to 160 existing beds in the Toronto area (for a nominal fee), to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto. This partnership is tentative and is dependent on the approval of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, his staff, and members of the Legislature to support the Camões proposal; and to make the appropriate administrative and policy changes required to develop a Portuguese Canadian long-term-care home in Toronto."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm delighted to sign it.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005 (NO. 2)

##### LOI DE 2005

##### SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (N° 2)

Mr. Duncan moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to implement 2005 Budget measures and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 18, Loi mettant en



œuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2005 et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Would the minister choose to lead off the debate? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I'm pleased to rise to speak about Bill 18, and I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge.

I'm proud to be here today to speak to this bill. It's an important part of our government's budgetary policy. This bill implements measures arising from this year's budget—a budget that delivers on what Ontarians want. This bill proposes amendments to some 23 provincial statutes. However, I don't propose to go into a great deal of detail on all of these amendments at this time. As I stated, my parliamentary assistant will be speaking to this bill as well, and at this time, I would like to focus my comments on those measures that fall under two broad areas: those that would support investment and job creation in the province, and those that underscore our commitment to fairness, accountability and transparency. I will begin by discussing some of our proposed changes to the tax system.

Seniors have given, and continue to give, so much to our communities. Their contribution, their commitment to building a stronger, more prosperous Ontario has been key to our collective success. We owe them more than just a debt of gratitude. We owe them a dignified life, befitting who they are and what they have accomplished in their lives. Indeed, the author Tom Brokaw wrote the book about the greatest generation, and indeed, our parents and grandparents were part of the greatest generation—the generation that lived through the Great Depression and fought two world wars. We owe them a dignified life, befitting who they are and what they've accomplished.

So in this bill, we are proposing changes to the Income Tax Act that would ensure that seniors get to keep more of their hard-earned income. With the consent of the Legislature, our bill will ensure that seniors are not financially penalized by having their property and sales tax credits reduced for 2005, if there is a cost-of-living increase in the amount of federal old age security and the federal guaranteed income supplement. This is not only good news for seniors, but good news for everyone. I hope that the opposition won't vote against this bill or block this bill, because that's an important part of the bill, and something I think we would all want to support.

1550

This amendment builds on the positive initiatives this government has already put in place for seniors, such as increasing the available property tax credit to \$625 for low- and middle-income seniors—\$625, something we on this side of the House are very, very proud of. I know my colleagues voted in favour of it and spoke in favour of it. Unfortunately, the New Democrats and the Conservatives voted against it, voted against helping our

seniors stay in their homes—something they all speak a good game about, but again, I remind you that they voted against it when they had the chance. I can only hope that they won't vote against this particular bill, which provides, I think, this tremendous incentive for seniors.

As we continue to help Ontario's aging population, we have not forgotten the other end of the spectrum. Young people who are just entering the workforce are equally important. As members will recall, we introduced the apprenticeship training tax credit in our first budget, in 2004. This bill contains a number of provisions to help ensure effectiveness of this tax credit, which is a key element in our plan to increase the number of new annual entrants into apprenticeship by 7,000, reaching 26,000 new entrants annually by 2007-08. Imagine that: a policy that increases the number of apprenticeships and trains young people for high-paying, high-skilled jobs. In this budget, the goal in turn supports our \$6.2-billion Reaching Higher plan, the most ambitious investment in post-secondary education in this province in 40 years.

We are also taking steps to parallel a new federal tax credit for adoption and a recent federal enhancement to the medical expense tax credit. Similarly, we are proposing to adopt the tax shelter rolls in the federal Income Tax Act as they relate to corporations. Those who follow our venture capital sector will know that we have already announced our intention to phase out the provincial tax credit for labour-sponsored investment funds by the end of 2010. The bill before us would give legislative and regulatory force to key elements of our plan, including additional information about the timeliness for an orderly windup of this tax credit and other important new rules. We continue to consult with those involved in this area of our economy and will report back on future developments in due course.

I want to turn my attention now to another important area of our economy, and our culture, and that is book publishing. Although Ontario's book publishing sector accounts for 39% of the country's book publishers, it produces 49% of new or reprinted titles, and generates, indeed, 71% of total book sale revenue; all this, while employing more than six out of every 10 people who work in the business in Canada and generating \$1.7 billion in annual revenues—some 71% of the national total. I am particularly proud that this bill would expand the Ontario book publishing tax credit to recognize the importance of children's books. Specifically, we're proposing to increase from one to four the categories of children's books eligible for the credit. It would also increase the number of eligible authors, making them eligible for up to 12 books, as opposed to three now. As a father myself, I value the contribution children's authors make to our society and I am proud that we are expanding the tax credit, and again, I would be most surprised if the opposition parties voted against this very, very important initiative.

For instance, the New Democrats voted against cancelling the corporate tax credits. They voted against that. They voted against our government's plan to re-

invest in education and health care. Of course, we know that the priority of the Tories is tax cuts for their wealthy friends, whereas this government is investing in education, health care, economic infrastructure and renewal.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The members laugh, but their voting records are clear and unequivocal. They've already indicated they're going to vote against these important measures—

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** They're at the Albany Club.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Yes, they're at the Albany Club. They would probably vote for tax credits for members of the Albany Club, but when it comes to children's book authors and senior citizens, they'll vote it down. I really hope they'll think long and hard before voting against these important measures, because their record has not been, in our view, the best record when it comes to that.

As we evolve to become a more knowledge-based economy, the small corner stores of yesterday are increasingly finding that software vendors and computer service outlets are becoming their next door neighbours. Historically, they faced a menu of taxable and non-taxable items, requiring them to determine their tax liability. Our fall budget bill proposes a way to address this situation and simplify matters for small vendors—once again, the government responding to our small business community, once again reducing red tape. Yet once again, I fear the Conservatives will vote against this.

Certainly I would expect the New Democrats to vote against something of this nature, and they probably will. I hope they won't try to block the bill but will allow it to be passed in an orderly fashion so that these important measures, which will help our small businesses, will become the law of the province.

Under our proposed program, small software vendors would be able to charge a blended rate of 6% on certain bundled transactions, provided the customer agrees. Spared from having to figure out which parts are taxable and which are not, vendors could realize substantial administrative and cost savings.

While we're on the subject of recognizing changes in our economy, I'd like to spend a moment talking about our proposed amendments to the Pension Benefits Act. When the act was last rewritten in 1986, there were a small number of jointly sponsored defined benefit pension plans with very few members. The act did not explicitly recognize this type of pension plan. Today, as we all know, they have become much more prevalent. The five largest such plans account for one third of all pension plan members in Ontario.

Earlier this year, the officials in my ministry consulted with our stakeholders on a number of proposals that would enable jointly sponsored plans to comply with the Pension Benefits Act and be much easier to administer. I am proud to say that the response we received to our proposals from pension plans, employers, unions and pension professionals was overwhelmingly positive. The measures we have proposed in this bill would not affect

the benefit provisions of the affected pension plans. They update the regulations in a way that I believe all parties will find satisfactory.

In a similar vein, we are proposing a number of changes under the Securities Act reflecting our commitment to modernized securities regulation and encouraging high standards of investor protection and corporate governance. Our proposed changes also address a number of recommendations made by the standing committee on finance and economic affairs in its unanimous report on the five-year review of the Securities Act.

I want to pause for a moment. I see the government House leader here. This government listens to what members of provincial Parliament have to say—all members of provincial Parliament—through their committees. Here we have a unanimous report from that committee. Unlike the previous government, we're prepared to act on those kinds of recommendations, and we've contained them in this bill. I do hope again that having supported this in committee, the members of the opposition won't now vote against the budget bill that contains, as I have indicated, a number of proposals and a variety of pieces of legislation, most of which have been accepted by stakeholders and I think most of which we can agree form the basis of good public policy.

Some of the examples of the new provisions with respect to the Ontario Securities Commission: We will enhance the ability of the commission to design governance frameworks for investment fund conflicts of interest. This would give the OSC the flexibility to respond as best practices for the governance of public companies continue to evolve. We are also preparing measures for enhanced legislative oversight of the OSC. I'm very proud of these measures, and I know that my colleague the Honourable Gerry Phillips would be happy to provide additional detail to interested members in his role as the minister responsible for securities regulation. Accountability must also be a watchword in the public sector. This government, more than any previous government, has shown genuine leadership in this regard.

**1600**

I am pleased to report that at the request of my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, we've included in this bill provisions affecting the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp. Specifically, we have proposed two amendments that would support the corporation's transition from planning to implementation. Think of the significance of that to Toronto: moving the waterfront corporation from planning to implementation. That is extremely important, and I think it marks an important turning point as we the government of Ontario work with the people of Toronto on the eventual development of their waterfront in a way that all of us would be most proud of.

The first specific amendment that we're proposing would support the corporation's transition from planning to implementation, as I said. It would also allow the province and the city of Toronto to appoint one elected official each to the corporation's board of directors. The



second would allow the corporation to act as an agent on behalf of the province and the city on a case-by-case basis. Taken together, the elements of this bill, especially when seen in combination with Bill 197, accurately and fully reflect the priorities of our government.

I would like to conclude with a quotation that provides a degree of insight into our approach to this bill and to the management of government in general. Former US President Calvin Coolidge said:

"Good government cannot be found on the bargain counter. We have seen samples of bargain counter government in the past when low tax rates were secured by increasing the bonded debt for current expenses or refusing to keep our institutions up to the standard in repairs, extensions, equipment and accommodations. I refuse ... to endorse that method of sham and shoddy economy."

I would point out to the members that President Coolidge was in fact a Republican, but clearly a politician of vision, compassion, caring and commitment. I'm proud to say that our government also shares these values.

Our budget legislation advances our plan for the province's long-term growth and prosperity. It reiterates and builds on our commitment to transparency and accountability, and it demonstrates the continuation of our track record of sound, prudent fiscal and economic management. These are the same qualities I believe you will find in this bill, and they are the qualities that infuse our government.

I appreciate the members' attention in this matter, and I look forward to the debate. Again, I want to re-emphasize that this government's commitments are to the best public education system we can have, to the best public health care system we can have, to investments in our infrastructure and to getting the fundamentals right. To that end, we have moved to undo the damage of eight years of Conservative government in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Minister of Finance indicated he is sharing his time with his parliamentary assistant. I recognize the member for Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the Legislature today and add my voice to that of the Minister of Finance regarding the fall budget bill, Bill 18, an Act to implement 2005 Budget measures and amend various Acts. This important piece of legislation delivers on our spring budget commitments to build a strong economy in a culture of transparency and accountability. I'm particularly pleased that we managed to complete both debate earlier this afternoon and third reading on Bill 197, another aspect of the 2005-06 budget process.

As Minister Duncan mentioned, the bill proposes amendments to some 23 provincial statutes in total. I'd like to begin my tour of Bill 18 by highlighting just a few and by focusing on one issue in particular that alone affects some three different statutes within the overall legislative framework, the three statutes being the Insurance Act, the Highway Traffic Act and the Compulsory Automobile Insurance Act.

We're proposing amendments that would, if they were enacted, help keep automobile leasing and rental companies vibrant and would ensure that consumers have competition and choice in the automotive market. How do we propose to achieve that? First, by amending the Highway Traffic Act and the Insurance Act to provide for a \$1-million cap on the vicarious liability of leasing and rental companies. Certain commercial vehicles would even have a higher cap, because it seems appropriate to provide that higher level of protection in those particular instances.

What we're doing is amending priority rules to provide that for leased automobiles, those that are on a long-term rental arrangement, in effect, the auto insurance carried by the leasing customers—called the lessees in this case—is first in line for liability for damages arising from accidents caused by the negligent operation of a motor vehicle.

This is about fairness. Leasing and rental companies don't have control over the actions of the drivers. Those vehicles are in the hands of the drivers for an extended period of time, and there's no direct business relationship, save and except the rental, between the owners of the company and the actual drivers. Continuing to impose uncapped vicarious liability on the basis of ownership may unfairly drive up the cost of doing business for the leasing and rental companies. This would, in turn, drive up the cost of those leased or rented vehicles and thus the cost to the consumer who is choosing that form of auto usage.

A recent settlement for some \$13 million has highlighted the risk exposure for leasing and rental companies. The potential for high awards has led the leasing industry to reconsider, not only in this jurisdiction but in jurisdictions throughout North America, whether they can continue to provide leasing as an affordable option for consumers in this province.

I want to clarify that all other responsibilities and liabilities associated with vehicle ownership are maintained. It's only when a customer causes an accident and the rental or leasing company is being sued only on the basis of its ownership of the vehicle that the company would have a cap on its liability. In all other cases, the status quo would remain. By changing the priority rules, we're placing primary responsibility for accidents on the people with day-to-day care and operation of the vehicle: the lessee, the renter or the driver of that vehicle. For liability purposes, people would be treated the same whether they choose to lease, rent or purchase a vehicle.

It really is about fairness, and it's about helping to ensure that leasing remains an affordable option for drivers in Ontario.

Bill 18 is also about fairness for lower-income senior couples in Ontario. We're proposing to increase the income threshold for senior couples for the Ontario property and sales tax credit. The proposed threshold of \$22,250 would ensure that senior couples, including couples receiving GAINS benefits, do not experience any reduction of their credits as a result of federal adjust-



ments to the old age security and guaranteed income supplement benefits. Without implementation of this change, a senior couple would experience a loss in benefits due to cost-of-living increases in federal seniors' benefits. I don't think I need to explain to anyone in this Legislature that such a loss in benefits for a couple on fixed incomes would be very unfair.

Every \$1 of income over \$22,000 would reduce seniors' benefits by four cents. That doesn't seem like a lot. This in effect means that an increase in income of \$250 would reduce their Ontario property and sales tax credit by some \$10, and incrementally the loss to senior couples increases. If passed, this proposed enhancement would deliver \$2 million in benefits to about 215,000 senior couples in the province of Ontario.

Ontario businesses would also benefit from Bill 18, and one way they'd benefit would be through reduced red tape and increased efficiency in tax administration. For starters, we are proposing to establish a pilot program, which was first announced in the 2005 budget, for small software businesses that would simplify the calculation and collection of retail sales tax. This program would use a method for calculating the tax on software services contracts involving both taxable and non-taxable components.

Businesses that register for the pilot program would no longer have to separate the taxable software services from the bundle of services in a sales contract just to calculate the RST. Instead, with the consent of their customers, they would apply one lower tax rate to the whole price of the contract. The intent of the pilot is to help ease the administrative burdens for small vendors of software services. We will be announcing more details about this program shortly.

1610

It's not the only proposal in this bill, however, that would help to improve administrative efficiency and modernize government. A proposed amendment to the Ministry of Revenue Act would smooth the transition to tax administration by electronic or other alternate means. Despite living in the 21st century, most tax administration is often still done through filing paper documents by mail or by sending cheques. Bill 18 would authorize the minister to approve alternate delivery channels for such things as filing returns, making remittances and conducting business with the ministry. These alternate channels would include the use of electronic forms and e-banking. Many of us are familiar with this in our day-to-day personal banking and business transactions, but it's something that it truly is time for business to have the opportunity to use as well.

This amendment would help us keep up with the changes in technology that would improve efficiency in tax administration. We want to reduce the paper burden for Ontario businesses so they can focus on growing, expanding, and creating jobs here in the province of Ontario.

The minister earlier mentioned that Ontario's publishing industry would also get a boost from Bill 18.

We're proposing to enhance the Ontario book publishing tax credit to increase from one to four the number of categories under which children's books would be eligible. Children's books would now be eligible in the categories of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and biography. This would bring the treatment of children's books published after May 11, 2005, in line with the current treatment for adult books.

There are various administrative amendments proposed in the legislation as well. These measures, while hardly glamorous, will result in some significant changes for Ontario taxpayers and businesses.

Bill 18, however, would also introduce changes of a different sort. If passed, this bill would ensure a number of smaller but still necessary administrative amendments. For example, it would enshrine in law September 1, 2005, as the effective date for the exemption from retail sales tax for car booster seats. That has been a matter of some considerable discussion here in the Legislature over the past year. It would also clarify the application of Ontario's fuel tax to clear fuel and provide authority for calculating, paying, collecting and accounting for retail sales tax on the consumption or use of reusable containers acquired in Canada but refilled in Ontario.

Measures such as these may not be the stuff of headlines, Mr. Speaker, but they are important nonetheless. Ensuring the effectiveness of Ontario's tax laws is part of our commitment to governing our province responsibly, and it's a commitment we take extremely seriously.

We want to parallel some of the federal measures in our 2005 budget measures as well. As is often the case with budget bills, Bill 18 would legislate certain amendments to parallel actions of the federal government. Under the personal income tax system, Ontario automatically parallels many federal changes in accordance with our tax collection agreement. Other changes are often made to provide simplicity for taxpayers.

In our 2005 budget, we announced a proposal to parallel a federal adoption expense tax credit. We also announced an increase to the maximum amounts that can be claimed for dependants through the medical expense tax credit, from \$5,000 to \$10,000. And there is no question that those who are burdened with a large medical expense bill will certainly benefit from a doubling of that tax credit provision. This too would parallel a proposed federal amendment.

Bill 18 also proposes an amendment to adopt the federal rules that restrict the deductibility of charitable donations of a corporation where there is a change of control to the corporation. Currently, there are no provisions in the federal Income Tax Act that allow individuals or corporations to sell or otherwise transfer unused donations. We're proposing to ensure that unused charitable donation deductions cannot be traded, but would rather be treated in a manner similar to the treatment accorded capital losses. This measure would help make our tax system fairer. Our government understands that the effectiveness and fairness of the tax system can be improved and that improvement is some-



thing worth striving for. Bill 18 is a big step in the right direction.

Another amendment that parallels similar amendments made by the federal government concerns the Ontario Corporations Tax Act and the general anti-avoidance rule in the federal Income Tax Act. Recent federal amendments were made to protect tax revenues that would be lost through tax avoidance transactions involving the abuse of provisions in the federal Income Tax Act regulations and tax treaties. Bill 18 would extend the anti-avoidance provision in the Corporations Tax Act to harmonize with the federal changes. This would deliver on a commitment made in the 2005 budget.

To this point, I've had the opportunity to provide a very brief tour of some of the highlights of Bill 18. I know that colleagues in the Legislature will have the opportunity to speak to it and add considerably more detail as the debate through second reading continues. We're determined to deliver on our budget commitments to build a strong economy within a culture of transparency and accountability. That's why Bill 18 would also increase investor confidence in capital markets by moving on recommendations of the standing committee and the five-year review committee for Securities Act reform, and reduce the use of tax credits no longer required by phasing out the tax credits for labour-sponsored investment funds by the end of 2010. The merits of these and other provisions within Bill 18 will be expanded upon during the course of the overall debate.

The minister during his time took the opportunity to comment on a particular matter of interest that I would just like to reiterate. That has to do with the Toronto waterfront corporation. The provisions there, in particular, ensure that there is an opportunity for the municipality and for the province to appoint, if they so choose, elected members to that corporation. I can think of no better opportunity, with the amount of tax dollars being expended, whether municipal dollars or provincial dollars or federal commitments, to ensure that there's an opportunity for the direct representation important to Toronto's waterfront and important to investments in the province of Ontario.

I would like to draw attention to one other aspect of the legislation, under schedule 9, the GO Transit Act, 2001. This legislation will provide for the extension of the municipal development charges bylaws of the act, having them stay in force until the end of 2006, unless they are repealed earlier. I can tell you that municipalities in the greater Toronto area who are dealing with GO Transit will be very pleased with this provision in the act, because the last thing they want to see would be legislation related to their development charges bylaw for GO Transit purposes to lapse. Certainly, with our interest and initiative in enhancing and ensuring transit as a viable means of operation and travel within the province of Ontario and within the GTA in particular, we need to ensure that municipalities continue to collect a development charge related to that.

The legislation covers a wide array of areas. Certainly a number of administrative matters are considered within

the legislation. I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to add a few comments in support of the minister's earlier comments and look forward to the debate from other members of the Legislature during second reading of Bill 18.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I was interested to listen to the Minister of Finance's comments on this bill. He was investing in education, he was investing in health care, he was investing all over the place, and he was very critical of our government in his comments, because we weren't making these kinds of investments. As I recall, I think we invested a significant amount of money—I think it was about \$10.5 billion—in health care, and several billion dollars in education. I believe it was \$5 billion or \$6 billion over the term of our government.

One thing I think the minister didn't comment on is where this vast amount of money that he's going to reinvest in these areas is going to come from. He will know, as the Minister of Finance—at least I certainly hope he knows; otherwise, the minister of brown out, which he was when he was in energy, is going to brownout this province in a very financial and economic way. The money that is going to come for that reinvestment is going to come from jobs in this province: good, full-time, long-term manufacturing jobs. That's what is going to sustain this province and pay the bills so that we can invest in health care, so that we can invest in education, so that we can invest in the protection of our environment; so we can invest in those things that Ontarians hold true, so we can invest in more roads, controlling to some degree, anyway, the gridlock that paralyzes this province in the morning and the evening drives. Those are the kinds of things that are going to create prosperity in this province, so that we can reinvest the new tax dollars in new jobs.

That's not happening. Over the last two months, we have seen 8,000, 10,000, 12,000 new manufacturing jobs disappear from this province. With every one of those jobs that disappears, a taxpayer goes with it and that money no longer flows into the coffers of the Ontario government. Without that money flowing into the coffers of the Ontario government, it becomes more difficult to reinvest in those things that Ontarians hold dear.

1620

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** I listened intently to the Minister of Finance and to his parliamentary assistant, the member from Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, and what they had to say about this bill. This bill is one of those omnibus bills, one of those bills that contains everything. There are 23 schedules, 23 different acts, and what they are talking about, of course, is the heartthrob, talking about seniors. Well, if you go to the section of the bill, you will see that this bill, I am sure, is being visited in 10 provinces across this country. The provision of this bill will be identical in Quebec, will be identical in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Alberta and British Columbia, because this is simply mirroring what is happening federally in Ottawa.



It will allow seniors to get a maximum of \$625. The provision of the bill is not some kind of tax rate, that seniors are going to end up with \$625, as was intimated. In fact, the provision of the bill quite clearly says that it's a re-enactment and will ensure that property and sales tax credits for a senior who resides with a cohabiting spouse etc. are to a maximum of \$625, or the occupancy cost, whichever is lesser.

When the minister stood up and said that the opposition parties voted against a similar provision in the past, I don't think the opposition parties were opposed to giving seniors more money; we were opposed to Bill 2, and we were opposed to Bill 2 precisely because it was retroactive. I think if you remember that debate, Mr. Speaker, you will know that that was the reason, and not that which was given by the Minister of Finance today.

**Ms. Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I'm pleased to rise to make some comments to this bill. I too heard the Minister of Finance and listened to the member from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, who went into quite a bit of detail concerning the various provisions that are impacted by this bill. As you know, basically, this bill is to implement a number of the commitments that were made in the 2005 budget act. This is about implementing those things. It's about making sure that we can deal with legislative requirements so that you can then bring into action some of those, if you want, decisions that were made or some of the decisions that we wanted to make vis-à-vis the budget statement. That's basically what this does, and it impacts many, many acts. Again, that is absolutely true.

Again, it reflects the commitments to build a strong economy in the province. It really does. It does it through changes in some of the taxation aspects. It's delivering on the budget commitments to build a strong economy, and building and creating a different culture, a culture of transparency and accountability.

There is also the whole issue of securities and investor confidence, and therefore we are again implementing a number of those requirements that we need to put into legislation to make changes in that respect. This bill is just implementation.

**The Acting Speaker:** We have time for one last question or comment. I turn to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I'm pleased to add some comments to the opening speech from the Minister of Finance on Bill 18, a government budget bill. He was complaining about the official opposition voting against the government's budget bills. Well, we're voting against deficit financing. We're voting against increasing the debt of this province. We're voting against the broken promises that are being implemented by this government, such as the broken promise about increasing taxes when we see corporations in this province realizing a 27% increase in taxes since this government came into power two years ago. Families have seen an increase in taxes of some \$900 in terms of the new health tax for the typical family.

We've seen more bad news today on the economic front. We received terrible news at noon today from Thunder Bay that the Cascades paper mill will be closing. That's some 550 employees of Cascades in Thunder Bay who will be losing their jobs sometime around Christmas. This mill is closing because of another broken Liberal promise, and that was the promise to maintain energy prices. High energy prices are a big part of why that mill is moving to Quebec, as far as I understand.

I ask the government, does the government value the forestry sector in Ontario and, if so, then why don't you implement some of the 26 recommendations made by the Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness to address things like the high wood costs that we have here in Ontario? We now have the highest wood costs in the world, some US\$55 per cubic meter. If you're serious about addressing the problems that are facing the forestry sector, then implement some of those 26 recommendations put forward by the minister's own Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Arthurs:** I'm pleased to take a moment or so in response to some of the comments by the members from Halton, Beaches-East York, Sarnia-Lambton and Parry Sound-Muskoka, and we thank them for their comments.

The member from Halton certainly spoke to the need to reinvest and the need for new investments. Let's not forget that in our time in office, there has been the creation of some 214,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario. That record, as it continues, will see substantial growth and opportunities for young Ontarians, new Ontarians and for those Ontarians who are displaced from jobs because of changing economies.

We are focused on the primary issues, as the minister said. We're focused on education; that's why we have the \$6.2 billion commitment over five years to post-secondary education. We're committed to health transformation and investing in that, not only in dollars, but also in transforming the systems. We're committed to the economy, and thus we've committed \$500 million to an auto investment strategy. To date we've made provisions for funding, as the money flows, as the projects come on stream for Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. It's a good news story that we've done that, particularly as it relates to GM, in light of what happened yesterday. There's a very strong commitment on their part to the Beacon project, and that will see not only the retention of jobs, but it will also see opportunities for growth in the future through educational opportunities and research opportunities to ensure that the automotive sector in Ontario stays strong in the long term.

Clearly, there will be individual companies, individual points in time—this is a sad one that we've seen in the past day or so at GM, but there's a lot of strength in the economy that way: Toyota and its commitment to a new plant in Ontario and the exploration by Honda of the potential for yet another plant. I think there will be yet more opportunities in the future.



This budget bill does some administrative changes. As part of the overall budget strategy, it also stays focused on our key commitments in health, education and the economy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate on Bill 18? The member Erie—Lincoln.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and two colleagues, for their great anticipation. I'm happy that one of my favourite members is here, the member from Peterborough, who always seems to listen to my speeches, which I do appreciate, and I enjoy his interjections from time to time—and Middlesex as well.

It's a pleasure to rise and offer up some comments as the official finance critic for the opposition. Bill 18, of course, is now the second budget bill, so to speak, coming from this spring's past budget, then delivered by Minister of Finance Sorbora, and now is legislation introduced by the new Minister of Finance Duncan.

As I always say, whenever we talk about budget bills, be it Bill 18 or Bill 197, it's predecessor, which we voted on today, I think it's always important to put these bills into a larger context in two important areas.

1630

First, how does it fit in overall with the government's fiscal plan or lack thereof? What is their plan for creating jobs in Ontario? What is their plan for bringing tax relief to hard-pressed and middle-class families, seniors or young people? What is their plan to ensure any kind of fiscal responsibility with the hard-earned tax dollars that come the way of the treasury?

Secondly, a growing concern—and you've seen it dominate question period here, as well as debate in the Legislature this fall session as we head into winter—is the overall state of the economy, particularly the significant decline in manufacturing jobs that has sadly occurred in the province, exacerbated by the devastating news in Oshawa and St. Catharines, and in fact for the province as a whole, with the 3,000-plus jobs being severed by General Motors in those two communities. We would have thought that today we would have heard a better response from the Premier. Maybe my colleagues in the Legislature, in debate on Bill 18, will bring forward a better response as to what the government's plan is to restore Ontario's strong manufacturing base, which traditionally has been the lead in Canada and the envy of the other nine provinces. But as our leader John Tory indicated, we seem to have a "Don't worry, be happy," approach by Premier McGuinty that seems almost dismissive of the real and pressing concerns felt not only by those families who are facing job losses but those communities as a whole and other auto workers who are concerned about where the axe is going to fall next.

I'll get into those two items as I set the stage for the kind of environment that we greet Bill 18 with today, November 22.

I listened as well to my colleagues the finance minister and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. This is more to the finance minister, who I think

unfairly, and probably intentionally so, characterized the opposition's approach to this legislation. My colleague from Beaches—East York, properly and in a very statesmanlike manner, admonished the finance minister for his very unfair characterization. I hope he wasn't intentionally creating mischief, but I think he was. Indeed, as my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka indicated, opposition parties are rejecting this bill because it is part of an overall Dalton McGuinty plan to dramatically increase taxes on working families.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member for Erie—Lincoln, but I have to interrupt him to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Haliburton—Victoria—Brock has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning Carden and Dalton students. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m. Once again, I apologize to the member for Erie—Lincoln. I'm compelled to inform the House of this before 5 o'clock. I should have done it before you started your speech.

I return to the member for Erie—Lincoln.

#### BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005 (NO. 2)

(continued)

#### LOI DE 2005

#### SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (N° 2)

(suite)

**Mr. Hudak:** Thank you, Speaker. Of course, that's no problem, and I bow to the Chair. I was pleased to hear that news because I too was dissatisfied by the answer from the Minister of Education.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Hudak:** I can tell by the response in the Legislature that I may not be alone in that disappointment with the Minister of Education's response. I think my colleagues from Haliburton—Victoria—Brock and Simcoe North brought forward a very important issue with respect to the local school boards and bus transportation. We saw the galleries full today with students, parents, teachers and seniors in support of correcting this situation. I commend my colleagues for bringing it to the floor of the Legislature. I'm pleased that Ms. Scott, the member for Haliburton—Victoria—Brock, has registered her dissatisfaction. Maybe now that the Minister of Education has more time to consider the issue, he'll give a much better answer and indicate how he is going to solve this problem, instead of simply passing the buck.

The Minister of Finance, as I return to my remarks on Bill 18, implied that our opposition to this bill is somehow a vote against seniors. It's a very sad characterization, one that does not, of course, meet with any facts.

Let me say this as well. We oppose the Dalton McGuinty budget bills and the budget plan for a number

of reasons. Among the most important is the devastating increase in taxes, and fees and other burdens that are loading up on the backs of working families; the devastating increases in taxes and new fees and in new burdens they're putting on the backs of seniors. We oppose their budget because of the increasing burden, taxes, fees, cost-of-living increases on young people who are trying to make ends meet. Sadly, even two years into this government, we see no end to their appetite for their tax-and-spend policies.

We also oppose, as my friend from Parry Sound-Muskoka indicated, the government's general approach in terms of their reckless runaway spending. I'll reiterate in the House once more: Some \$13 billion in increased revenue has come into the coffers of the province of Ontario, and despite that record influx of new money coming out of pockets of hard-working families, seniors and young people, this government continues to run a deficit. They have a major runaway spending problem. And, sadly, how can I support a budget bill—Bill 18, this one—when there is no initiative of substance in this bill, nor was there in 197, to correct that situation? In fact, it is hard to believe that the government even plans on running a deficit this year as well, despite this huge influx of new revenue coming into provincial coffers.

To comment back to the Minister of Finance on the seniors issue particularly, this is the government that, as one of its first acts, took away the seniors' property tax benefit. We had passed in the previous government a bill that would forgive the education portions of property taxes for seniors, a bill that would have put some money back into the pockets of seniors on fixed incomes who have already contributed, through decades of work, to their school systems. One of Dalton McGuinty's first acts as Premier was to mercilessly rake that money back from seniors. He added that to the provincial treasury on top of the record other revenues that came in.

Of course, we cannot forget that part of that massive tax hike bill that Dalton McGuinty introduced as one of his first acts in the Legislature was the elimination of the independent school tax credit, which benefited parents who sent their children to independent schools, who still paid taxes into the public system, just as we all do. And despite paying into that system, they make extensive sacrifices to send their children to great schools like Smithville District Christian School, or Heritage Christian School in Jordan Station. Smithville district, of course, was here in the gallery watching question period yesterday afternoon. It was great to see them here. Hard-working middle-class families had that tax benefit clawed away from them retroactively--11 months in reverse.

You know, it's hard to contemplate that they would bring forward such a cruel action. Maybe if they had said it was going to take place in the next year, that would have given families some time for preparation, but to claw that away 11 months into the calendar year was cruel. I think it was done as part of political payback as opposed to being motivated for the right reasons. That's regrettable, but that fight ain't over, and hopefully we'll

see some justice served for those parents who make sacrifices to send their kids to independent schools.

Seniors, as I said, were part of that massive tax grab by Dalton McGuinty and lost that education property tax benefit. I know that I have dealt with in my office, and I suspect some of my colleagues have as well—I know the member for Beaches-East York had dealt with this, and he brought it to the floor of the Legislature—seniors who had applied for assistance to adjust their automobiles when one of them was disabled. I forget the exact name of that tax credit, but it would help out my constituent, a gentleman from Beamsville whose wife had several debilitating physical challenges, and therefore they were adjusting their vehicle and making the changes so they could transport her, whether to medical appointments or for some recreation. It was something they had counted on, had applied for, and then they found out that Dalton McGuinty had taken that away as well as part of his massive tax grab that impacted seniors in at least these two ways.

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That's not all. If the finance minister were interested in defending seniors and helping them make ends meet, you'd think he'd do something about the massive assessment increases and the tax credit the province may receive from the education tax rate on the recent MPAC assessments. We're all getting them, whether it's in Waterloo-Wellington, York North, the Niagara Peninsula, Haldimand county or Erie-Lincoln. A significant new tax increase is possible if the education tax rate is not brought down: In my area—well, it varied in the Niagara Peninsula, but about 14% or 15%, on average, in increased assessments. Many seniors who have lived in the same home for years and years—decades—now find that with increased assessments, it's difficult, if not impossible, to pay the property tax bill. I think we've all encountered that in our constituency offices.

**Mr. Leal:** Tim, who brought in CVA? Let's be serious.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague says, "Who brought in CVA?" I remember the Liberals saying that they were going to fix the system. Maybe Peterborough knows something I don't, but I've seen no action on that in two years' time. You'd think after two years, they would move on from the blame game and actually start making some decisions, if they actually believed in it, but I think they just made all kinds of campaign promises with no intention of keeping them whatsoever. The member from Northumberland, for example, is considering going into real estate, I think, to help seniors sell their homes.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** No, it's not accurate, but there's a newspaper story that gave that impression. So I think maybe we've touched a bit of a nerve here, because surely, if they feel that strongly—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** A couple of the government members seem to have overlooked the fact that the member for Erie-Lincoln has the floor. I would return to the member for Erie-Lincoln.



**Mr. Hudak:** It appears that on a usually rather serene orders-of-the-day speech, I've touched a bit of a nerve here about the lack of response from the Liberal government to address the situation of seniors potentially losing their homes from rate increases. I hope they use the same passion that they're heckling me with in going after the Minister of Finance in caucus. We've asked on a couple of occasions for the Minister of Finance to commit to lowering the—

**Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex):** You stir up more passion.

**Mr. Hudak:** You have gone after him in caucus.

**Mr. Crozier:** You stir up more passion.

**Mr. Hudak:** I stir up more passion than the Minister of Finance, who can be a passionate guy. I would hope that he would direct that passion to helping out seniors who are facing substantial increases in taxes and user fees.

One option that the minister has at hand is to reduce the education property tax rate, to ensure that there is not a stealth property tax increase by keeping that level constant. As assessments go up, the province could pocket a windfall, and I wouldn't put it past them. I wouldn't put it past the Liberal government, which seems to have an insatiable appetite for tax hikes, to try just such a tack. Of course, previous Conservative finance ministers always reduced the education property tax rate when the average assessment increased, to make sure that that was not the case. I know Minister Sorbara had done that as well when he was finance minister, and I hope Minister Duncan won't suddenly break with tradition in order to squeeze more money out of seniors. I'm a little concerned that he has not responded to my questions in that respect. Hopefully we'll have clarification soon that indeed the education property tax rate will be reduced at a pace with the assessment increases.

The last thing on the seniors' topic—I didn't mean to dwell on it to this extent, but the Minister of Finance had cloaked himself in the guise of the big defender of seniors. This is the same minister who, as energy minister, despite campaign promises to freeze hydro rates, imposed punishing new increases in hydro rates on working families, young people and seniors. If you're on a fixed income and you're facing what has been approximately a 20% hydro increase, with another potential 30% hydro increase in 2006, and you've seen approval of increases in the rates for natural gas and home heating fuel, you wonder if anybody on the government side is on the side of assisting our seniors, or is just cloaking themselves in that disguise.

I think all of us probably have seniors in our ridings who have electric heat. In fact, I think there was a policy in the old, big Ontario Hydro days that encouraged people to switch to electric heat. Many seniors did that, and now, as a result, they're facing skyrocketing hydro bills. Granted, if the government had campaigned on saying they were increasing hydro, there would have been a fair choice for consumers, and they would have known what they were getting, but sadly, Dalton

McGuinty instead promised that he would freeze hydro rates and then, once in office, tossed that campaign pledge right out the window and has increased hydro rates dramatically, again impacting seniors significantly.

I just wanted to address the issue of the Minister of Finance pretending to be a defender of seniors. There are some initiatives that he could take on, or perhaps the new energy minister will take on, to assist our seniors.

The other aspect when we are talking about Bill 18 that we can't forget to consider is the state of the economy. Of course, it's elementary that any changes in employment and any changes in growth have a dramatic impact on revenue that comes in to the provincial coffers.

Every day we get our major print media clippings. Let's look at some of the headlines here. Here's the Toronto Star: "Cuts at GM Threaten 15,000 Canadian Jobs." The National Post: "GM Plans 30,000 Job Cuts"—that's both in the States and Ontario. The Globe and Mail, page A1: "GM to Shut ... Oshawa Plant: Auto maker to slash 3,900 jobs in Canada," which I think are all in Ontario. "Layoffs a Bitter Pill for Oshawa's Auto Workers: One of North America's most efficient plants will lose almost 4,000 jobs"; that's in the Globe and Mail business section. Here's a disturbing headline in the Toronto Star: "Premier Downplays GM Cuts: 3,600 job losses are just a 'little bit of contraction.'" That's how the Premier described it.

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** That's cold-hearted.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague from Whitby-Ajax says that's cold-hearted. It was a strange and puzzling reaction by Premier McGuinty to this news that is simply devastating for communities like St. Catharines, like Oshawa, and in fact, this level of job loss in an important industry, to the province as a whole. For the Premier to describe it as—

**Mr. Leal:** Tim, you missed the clipping that says DaimlerChrysler to invest \$768 million in Ontario.

**Mr. Hudak:** It's the unfortunate spin, I guess, of Premier McGuinty, and now some of his colleagues are trying the same game, this "Don't worry; be happy" that we're losing all these jobs at GM. I think there are articles in here about how Ford is going to be laying people off as well. They basically sing that old Bobby McFerrin tune and say "Don't worry; be happy," that it's really not a big deal, and if you just look at page 18, that means the first 17 don't matter. That's a regrettable approach. To say it's a little bit of a contraction is really a sad comment to hear from the Premier of the province of Ontario. First of all, it shows no compassion, but secondly, it just seems to be like water off a duck's back. He doesn't seem to understand the severity of this impact and what it means for our domestic economy. It's not like it was a flat tire; this is a car wreck.

I'll go on with some of the other articles that are included. Let's view some specifics. The Globe and Mail had an article called "The Fallout" in the business section. In Oshawa car plant 1, "Layoffs: The plant's third shift will be eliminated in late 2006, affecting 1,000 hourly employees." At car plant 2, "Layoffs: "2,750.

Both shifts will be eliminated at the end of 2008.” That’s over 1,000 cars a day that we can take pride in and that have come out of the Oshawa plant that will now go idle.

Of course, a very important plant for those of us who represent the Niagara region is the St. Catharines plant site. At the Ontario Street plant, 130 jobs: “A variety of components including connecting rods, clutch shafts, radiators and struts” are manufactured there, and we’ll be losing those 130 jobs. Those are people who work in St. Catharines and who live throughout the Niagara Peninsula, who invest in our economy. No doubt when you look at the St. Catharines Standard, the Welland Tribune, the Niagara Falls Review, and Niagara This Week when the weeklies come out, this will sadly feature prominently on the front pages. When you hear the Premier’s refrain of “Don’t worry; be happy,” people will find no consolation in that kind of attitude.

The Toronto Sun editorial in our clippings: “Job Cuts: Big Deal, says Dalton,” just to quote from the editorial. Premier, why don’t you ask the affected workers who received this devastating news a month before Christmas whether they will call it “a little bit of contraction”? Again, the Premier’s words, these devastating 3,000 to 4,000 layoffs: “a little bit of contraction.”

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They go on to say, “Bizarrely, both the feds and the province seized on GM’s prediction it will achieve most of the layoffs by early retirement and attrition as good news—as if that negates the net loss of 4,000 high-paying jobs and the devastating spinoff effects on the economy.” No doubt, their loss through attrition is preferable to having people laid off immediately, but you don’t want either of those scenarios. The loss of close to 4,000 high-paying jobs is indeed devastating for those communities and for the province as a whole.

The other interesting editorial comment on the same day, today, in Linda Leatherdale’s column in the Sun: “Don’t Forget About Us’: Sun Readers Point Out Layoffs at Carmaker are Devastating, but not Limited to GM.” Ms. Leatherdale goes through a litany of other manufacturing sites and people who work there or had worked there who write in about job closures across Ontario. One in Brantford is mentioned, and ABB in Guelph, which employed 280 people, is closing its doors. It was located, coincidentally, next to Imperial Tobacco, which is also closing and moving to Mexico—a loss of 500 jobs. AFG Glass: 200 jobs lost in Concord and another 50 in London. We also can’t forget about the rebound impacts, the multiplier impacts this will have on manufacturers in the province and parts manufacturers as well.

**Mr. Miller:** Forestry as well.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka, who has always been a strong champion of northern Ontario, points out that the forest industry, which plays such a major role in Ontario, often, in many of the northern communities that I have had the pleasure to visit as an MPP or minister, is by far the single biggest employer and contributor to the tax base. The news of

GM layoffs in the northern Ontario newspapers pales in comparison to the devastating news that we’re hearing from the north.

I’ll give you a couple of those, Mr. Speaker.

In the Sudbury Star article, James Wallace’s column, actually: “Lumbering into Obscurity: Liberals Turn a Blind Eye to the Plight of Northern Lumber Towns.

“Then, this summer, Abitibi-Consolidated announced plans to permanently shut down one paper machine at its Kenora mill and indefinitely idle another.” What are the impacts?

“Home values have plummeted, nobody is spending money, businesses are closing and young people are flocking out of town.”

James goes on to summarize the at-risk communities: “Some 40 communities and thousands of jobs province-wide are at risk, as well as \$1 billion in revenues for the province and local municipalities.”

One of the spokespersons here, Cec Makowski, the Ontario region vice-president from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, believes that “Ontario’s Liberal government is deliberately abandoning his industry and has turned a blind eye to the distant cuts and blood-letting going on in the north.” His exact quote: “The government’s response has been pathetically anemic to the challenges that face this industry.” There are certainly very strong comments by Cec Makowski. I don’t believe that the government has an intent to let this happen, but their response to this issue has been far, far from satisfactory, and quite the opposite.

Maybe “anemic” is actually a good word, because we heard today, for example, that Cascades, a major employer in the Thunder Bay area, has announced that it’s closing its doors. One of the issues that the forest industry brings forward and that Cascades brings forward today is the high cost of energy that is a primary reason for the shutdown. Sadly, I don’t see any end in sight to the Liberal energy rate increases. The previous Minister of Energy, now the Minister of Finance, and now the new Minister of Energy are signing long-term energy contracts to suppliers at extremely high prices, much higher than the market rate today. If you think energy prices are bad today, just you wait until these contracts dominate the market system.

Secondly, the loony policy that they have to eliminate 20% to 25% of our power supply, with no real plan to replace that supply, is going to drive rates up higher as well and drive businesses out of the province of Ontario.

But I’ll get to energy policy a bit later on. I did want to set up Bill 18 to talk a bit about the challenges faced by working families in the province and the challenges, sadly, faced by those who are laid off or are going to be laid off in auto manufacturing and the forest industry—the 550 families who will lose somebody who is working at Cascades in Thunder Bay. Unfortunately, in Bill 18 and Bill 197—in any of the finance bills—we’re not seeing any real plan to restore our manufacturing base. In fact, their plan pushes in the opposite direction through higher taxes, runaway deficits and higher hydro rates. I



worry that this is just the beginning of loss—a major exodus—of manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario.

The other aspect that I wanted to get to is the economic statement that was recently released. Bill 18 was introduced in the Legislature after the economic statement, just a day after, but it was obviously in construction and was contemplated in the budget bill before the economic statement. They would have had time to change Bill 18 in light of some of the troublesome news in the economic statement. You'd have thought the Minister of Finance would have had time to add some measures to Bill 18 to help turn this around.

Let me give you some examples: Economic indicators in the province, according to the economic statement, are in decline, in large part, going into the new fiscal year, the rate of growth being slower than we had seen in the previous year in many circumstances. The budget numbers were much more optimistic than the economic statement would indicate. For example, GDP growth, the projected growth rate for the province of Ontario, has been modified downward. Exports and import growth have also been modified downward from the 2005 budget. Retail sales growth, housing starts, personal income growth, wages and salaries, corporate profits, job creation and employment growth have all been revised downward from the 2005 budget.

Here we are, approximately six, seven months later, and they've already had to revise their projections for the economy, indicating that they do worry that something is going on, as I've illustrated with some of the job cuts, unfortunately. The Liberal government's performance to date gives no reason to expect the opposite. We are seeing the performance in the province weaken. In fact, in many areas, we find ourselves down from being one of the leaders in Canada to being closer to the middle—not traditionally Ontario's position.

The finance minister did say, I think in question period, if I recall, "Everything that's up is up; everything that's down is down." Well, if he thinks a revision for—"Everything that should be up is up; everything that should be down is down" I think was the quote, to be accurate. If he thinks that revising downward things like personal income growth, job growth and GDP growth is a good thing, that's certainly disturbing to hear from the finance minister.

As we in the opposition have also pointed out, the deficit is forecast to grow by 50% this year, from \$1.6 billion to \$2.4 billion. The final deficit reported for 2004-05 was \$1.6 billion, and now the projected deficit for this fiscal year is to go up to \$2.4 billion. So despite a significant increase in revenue coming into provincial coffers, the province plans to continue to run a deficit and, in fact, a deficit that is going to increase by 50% this year, if their forecasts are accurate.

Let me give you an example: I have often said in this Legislature that one of the problems is that they've had about four or five different fiscal plans. There is not a target that they haven't missed unerringly. In the 2004 budget, which was for the fiscal year 2004-05, they

projected spending for this fiscal year, 2005-06, to be \$80.5 billion. The economic statement released earlier this month projected revenue for this fiscal year of 2005-06 to be \$82.1 billion. Originally they were planning to spend \$80.5 billion and their projected revenue is \$82.1 billion. The math is pretty elementary. That would mean a \$1.6-billion surplus if they had stuck to the plan. But just like their campaign promises, previous budgets have the shelf life of a pear. They tossed it out and started all over again. Instead of having a \$1.6-billion surplus, if they had to stuck to their plan, they let spending get out of control and now have a forecast deficit of \$2.4 billion.

**1700**

In all my speeches on budget bills, I need to remind members of the assembly or those watching at home of some of the key campaign commitments Dalton McGuinty made around the budget, around fiscal policy, if you will. For example, Dalton McGuinty promised to balance the budget every year, from his first year in office to his last year in office. What do we find? Quite the opposite. He's planning on running a budget deficit; already has. This will be the third year he has done so, and he plans to run deficits into the future. Despite the fact that if they had stuck to a plan they would have a surplus, he continues to plan to run deficits into the future.

The one that people probably remember foremost: Dalton McGuinty promised that he wouldn't raise our taxes, but as we have seen in numerous budget bills that have come before this Legislature, or budget commitments, speeches by the minister, they did quite the opposite with the largest tax increase in the history of the province. We needn't remind members about the \$2.4-billion so-called health tax grab, which actually flows into general revenue, a devastating impact on working families and seniors, a 12% increase to the corporate income tax rate, and when you look at—was it Bill 2?—a bill that will live in infamy.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** One of the first things they did.

**Mr. Hudak:** One of the first things they did, almost right out of the gate, just couldn't help themselves: the biggest tax increase in the history of the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Barrett:** Hang on to your wallet.

**Mr. Hudak:** As my friend from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant says, hold on to your wallet, when we saw that baby coming down the line, the biggest tax increase in the history of Ontario.

Another famed Liberal promise, now discarded: no accounting trickery in the province's books. In fact, shortly thereafter, after assuming office, they got caught out by the Provincial Auditor not properly accounting for some \$4 billion in hydro liabilities. They used billions of dollars of revenue from past years to reduce their deficit, including tax receipts from as far back as 1995, in the previous fiscal year. So accounting trickery writ large here by the government, contrary to their campaign commitments.



I talked about this a little bit earlier—cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. In fact, we've seen them go up to 5.5 cents. It's a graduated rate depending on usage. We'll see another massive increase in the spring of 2006. I expect that hydro users are still waiting for the refund from the Dalton McGuinty government, which overcharged them for their hydro usage this past year. I fear we won't see that returned to users any time soon.

The other of the magnificent five broken finance promises: will not add to the debt. Dalton McGuinty said the debt will only go one way, and that's down. I guess in this world down is up and up is down, because the debt has actually gone up. The current Liberal plan changes every few months, as I said, but the current Liberal plan will see debt rise by almost \$20 billion by 2008-09. If you divide that up among every man, woman and child in Ontario, it's approximately \$1,000 in debt for every individual living in Ontario as a future tax burden. Another calculation on that: The debt is rising at more than \$75 per second under the McGuinty Liberals.

I don't need to dwell too much longer on the economic statement. I think I've made my main points, but that's how we greet Bill 18, in an environment with massive revenue increases but even larger spending increases. We've seen the deficit go up from \$1.6 billion to \$2.4 billion. If only the Liberals had stuck to their 2004-05 budget plan, we would actually be in surplus today, but as a matter of fact we find ourselves in yet another deficit because they cannot control spending.

I'll move on a little bit to some particular aspects of the bill. I did mention earlier on too about Ontario falling behind other provinces to the point where we are moving more toward the middle, and following the pack or being part of the pack instead of leader of the pack. Consumer confidence, for example, slid seven points in August and a further six points in September in the province of Ontario, much of this decline attributed to significant cooling of interest in big-ticket purchases. Housing starts have shown a similar decline and are not reflective of the rest of the country.

Home sales: I brought this up under Bill 197, but I'll say it again because I think it's an important set of data. Across Canada, results show that home sales have increased in 13 census metropolitan areas, CMAs, and decreased in 12. This survey showed they're up in 13 CMAs and decreased in 12. What is distressing is that among those 13 CMAs, those regions across Canada, only one of those was in Ontario. Furthermore, of the 12 CMAs reporting lower sales levels this past year, nine of them are in Ontario. So we have more than a lion's share of those that are in the bad category, the reduced-gain category, and we have only one of those that are in the gainer category. Just to be specific, those areas that are showing the lower sales levels this past year are Windsor, Hamilton, Toronto, Greater Sudbury, London, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Niagara, Kingston and Thunder Bay.

We can't forget as well the vulnerability of Ontario consumers to interest rate increases. Obviously, all Canadian consumers will be subject to being vulnerable

to interest rate increases, but because of Ontario's loss of disposable income due to the Dalton McGuinty health tax and increases in user fees and in hydro rates, they are particularly vulnerable if interest rates go up, especially those who are on variable rate mortgages or have borrowing requirements, for example; they will find it awfully hard to make ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario and, believe it or not, even harder than they do today.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's absolutely tragic what's happening.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague from Durham says it's tragic. My colleague has great knowledge of the Ontario auto industry. It's no doubt both sad and tragic, the news that will impact on his area in Durham, considering the between 3,000 and 4,000 layoffs of people who live in that area.

With respect to Bill 18, there are a number of schedules that I wanted to comment on. Schedule 3, the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act: This section would eliminate labour-sponsored investment funds by 2010, and the tax credit for research-oriented investment funds will be eliminated in the same schedule as the LSIFs. I had some clippings here, Mr. Speaker. I did have some more. I know these are entertaining to you.

We can't forget the history on this, just to concentrate on the recent history on schedule 3. My colleagues from the government side are boasting about this initiative in their speeches, but it's a strange tale on how it reached this point. I think we'll remember that in mid- or late September, then-Minister of Finance Sorbara announced that the LSIFs would be eliminated on a very accelerated schedule. He basically threw that announcement out there, did a press release and, as far as I could tell, didn't do any real consultation with industry, with holders of the assets or those that sell them. There was a major backlash.

Here's the Ottawa Citizen article from September 22. Just the headline I think helps tell the story: "End of the Line: Ontario's Decision to Kill a Popular Tax Break has Shaken up the Venture Capital Industry. Tech Start-ups will have to Scramble to Find New Sources of Capital," James Bagnall. It's quite an extensive article in the Ottawa Citizen that day, and I'll just give you a couple of highlights. He says in the article: "Hundreds of thousands of Ontario taxpayers are familiar with LSIFs—a kind of poor man's tax shelter. Anyone who puts down \$5,000 is entitled to a 30% tax credit: \$750 from Ontario and a matching amount from the federal government." He goes on to explain how this works in a bit more detail.

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More importantly to my point, until Minister Sorbara's announcement, "LSIFs had seemed entrenched—the Ontario version of the program has been around" in its main form "since 1991." It was expected—"Government and industry reps debated important but largely technical issues, including whether to alter requirements that spell out how funds should pace their investing activity." So if there were any consultations at all, this article would



seem to indicate that they forecast a small tinkering with the LSIF management program, but then all of a sudden, as Mr. Bagnall says, "in late August the tone of talks changed markedly. The industry found out why on August 29, when Sorbara revealed he was planning to eliminate the provincial tax credit sometime after the current fiscal year ends on February 28."

This had a dramatic impact on the LSIF market and on those investors: "Sorbara's surprising move prompted the strange spectacle of venture capital firms and associations communicating with the government through a series of press releases. The Canadian Venture Capital Association urged Sorbara to consult with the industry, pointing out that labour-sponsored funds had accounted for one-third of all risk money invested in the country." Mary Macdonald, the vice-president of Thomson Macdonald, a consulting firm that tracks the venture capital industry, said, "Withdrawing the LSIF program is a dangerous move, unless we have alternate sources of capital in place."

So it was a very strange scene when the McGuinty government suddenly announced that this program was being deep-sixed, with no real replacement program, and you saw the response by the industry and those that invest in LSIFs. The government then had to scramble and try to backtrack from its decision. I think people are happy that they finally did, but it didn't reflect well on the government at all. In fact, it looked like incompetence to see this issue handled in this way. We're pleased to see the situation corrected to an extent, but we found it passing strange that they entered into this mess of their own making.

Mr. Bagnall wrote a follow-up article on Saturday, October 1, just over a week or so later, in the *Ottawa Citizen* again: "McGuinty Admits Moving Too Quickly on Labour Funds: Premier Decides to Phase Out 15% Tax Credit Over Six Years." The article goes on: It was an "unusual mea culpa. Yesterday morning, Premier Dalton McGuinty acknowledged he and his officials had moved 'too quickly' to kill a popular tax credit responsible for raising hundreds of millions of dollars worth of venture capital.... Mr. McGuinty said later"—I'll go down the article—"that he had put too much pressure on his finance ministry officials to produce deficit-cutting measures." If he has put a lot of pressure on his finance officials for deficit-cutting measures, it must be a feather touch, because we've yet to see any significant deficit reduction measures.

I'll say it one more time. If they had stuck to their original plan—not their original plan, their plan in the 2004-05 budget—they'd be in a surplus position this fiscal year. But nonetheless, it's a very strange development, with a lot of backtracking by the government on the LSIFs. While my colleagues boast about schedule 3 in the legislation, we can't forget about that strange chapter in August, September and October, when the government made a bizarre decision and then quickly backtracked.

Schedule 4: Some colleagues have talked about that a little bit, the Compulsory Automobile Insurance Act,

changing the definition of "lessee" in the act for clarification purposes, in compliance with the Insurance Act. I won't, in my comments, dwell on that particular aspect of the bill.

I don't know, in the interests of time, if I'll have a chance to get into schedule 6, the Electricity Act, 1998, and my overall concerns with hydro policy. I'll try to get back to it, because I had promised that, Mr. Speaker, and I know that you want to hear my comments on the loony hydro policy of the McGuinty government.

**Mr. O'Toole:** That's being polite.

**Mr. Hudak:** "Being polite"; this is my colleague from Durham.

Let me hit a couple of things. I want to say some positive things about my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington. There are many positive things we could say about that member. I'm sure you would agree, Mr. Speaker. One thing he had championed on the floor of this assembly that we need to note in the debate on Bill 18 is that he had called upon the McGuinty government to extend the retail sales tax credit to booster seats.

The government had brought forward a bill that mandated booster seats for children of a certain size and age, and my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington said that if you're going to do that, the least you can do is extend the sales tax credit to cover those booster seats to help relieve some of the cost of this initiative, because as we all know, it's not only parents, but grandparents or coaches or anybody who transports these children around who is now required by law to have these booster seats. I know my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington had championed this, and I think we need to recognize that in the bill. We're pleased to see the government had added that aspect, schedule 19, to the bill, and I wanted to pause to recognize one of my colleagues, in case the government forgot to do so.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Hudak:** It's not often that I can make the Speaker laugh.

I wanted to talk a little bit about schedule 12, and that's changes to the Insurance Act. In summary, these provisions limit the liability of rental car companies and the like when accidents occur while a vehicle is under control of the lessee. In cases where an insurance claim is to be made, the lessee's insurance would be paramount to the lessor's.

I think my colleague from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge talked about this a little bit in his remarks, the vicarious liability issue, where somebody could have leased or rented a vehicle and been in a car accident and, unfortunately, in the situation described, caused devastating injuries to another, by way of example. They then faced a lawsuit, and the leasing company that owned the car or the rental company would find themselves as well under threat of a lawsuit. These were cases, to make the example clear, where there was not negligence on the part of the leasing or rental company. They had done due diligence, and despite that, there was still a tragic accident.

What the government is doing in the case of vicarious liability is to limit it, to cap it at \$1 million in liability. Many other jurisdictions have eliminated vicarious liability altogether. This government is limiting that initiative, but it is not eliminating vicarious liability. One of the concerns would be that in the pipeline there was, I think, approximately \$1 billion in outstanding liability claims filed in the Canadian courts on vicarious liability charges. This is a major issue in the United States of America, which of course has a slightly different tort system from ours that saw rates—you, Mr. Speaker, if you're renting or leasing a car, in particular in the states that had some major cases decided against the rental companies, would find a car difficult to find or its costs exorbitant.

What happened in the United States is that a new law was brought in—let me check my timing here. On August 10, 2005—so relatively recently—President Bush signed legislation that eliminated the vehicle lessor and renter vicarious liability across the US and overrode any contrary state legislation. States have some limited ability to do so on minimum insurance levels, but overall, the vicarious liability issue was eliminated in the United States. If I understand correctly, the reason it continues to exist in Ontario is the vagaries of the Highway Traffic Act that define what an “owner” of a vehicle is. There have been a number of other statutes that have been altered to clear that up. This one is just the latest one.

I look forward to debate on the vicarious liability issue, which is interesting. As I've said, it has provoked action in the States and now has provoked action in the province of Ontario, I think in anticipation of the massive lawsuits that are in the pipeline and their impact on the businesses. Hopefully we'll get some better understanding of the government's motive to cap as opposed to eliminating, or why the cap is set at a certain level. Maybe some will take the opinion that the cap will be unfair. So I look forward to debate on schedule 12 of Bill 18. It's certainly an important issue for the Legislature to address, and I look forward to colleagues' debate on that aspect.

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There are a number of other aspects that I probably won't have time to address, but due to popular request, the Electricity Act changes under schedule 6: They're technical in nature. They are retroactive in nature, which gets to a general concern that we in the opposition have of the retroactive tendencies of the Dalton McGuinty government. There are laws of a given day, and people act upon those laws; then if the laws change, their behaviour will change accordingly. But to retroactively change the laws with the presumption that somebody should have acted differently based on the original set of laws is a concept that I think most Ontario residents would have a great deal of trouble with.

But over and over again we have seen bills brought into this Legislature, and a number of initiatives in Bill 18, that continue that pattern of retroactivity, of changing the rules in the past, whether it's to claw more revenue

in, to increase taxes or other initiatives. There may be occasionally a case where retroactivity is warranted, but we need to be very careful and cautious.

**Mr. Barrett:** I'm thinking of independent schools.

**Mr. Hudak:** Independent schools, as my colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant points out, as I talked about a bit earlier on. That was eliminated retroactively, which was cruel—and cruelly done—and unjust.

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** And expensive.

**Mr. Hudak:** And expensive to those families, and probably some cost to administer.

There are aspects of the municipal legislation as well, with the greenbelt—Bill 26, among others—that similarly play a little fast and loose with retroactivity, changing the rules of the game in the past, instead of changing them from that point forward. We in this assembly certainly had a great deal of opportunity to bring forward our concerns, but sadly, not very much was listened to or implemented by the current provincial government to improve the greenbelt legislation.

Schedule 6 does have some retroactive aspects, and I want to register that general concern about retroactivity or, as my colleague from York North points out, the reverse onus provisions in a number of pieces of legislation that this government has brought forward. The infamous pit bull legislation is one that comes to mind, where individuals have to prove that their dog is not a pit bull as opposed to the state proving that their dog is a pit bull. It's a puzzling and disturbing trend toward retroactivity and reverse onus. It certainly is contrary to the way we usually approach things in the province of Ontario and in our country of Canada.

I do want to note, though, my overriding concern on hydro policy in the province. This notion that closing off 20% or 25% of our power supply by 2007—they've broken that promise and now say it's 2009 in the case of Nanticoke. There's no real plan to replace that power. The projects, whether in Mississauga or Brampton or projects in Lambton county, as well as St. Clair township, are dramatically behind schedule. The government is really taking a great gamble on depending on natural gas as the main producer of power in the province of Ontario. Certainly the volatility we've seen in gas prices, the rising cost of gas—the impact it'll have in the petrochemical industry, as well, which is their main feed for product, also should be contemplated. I register my concern about the impact on the petrochemical industry by their misguided policy and almost exclusive reliance, with the exception of a couple of windmills here or there, on gas to solve all their problems.

**Mrs. Munro:** That would be hot air.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague from York North says it's a lot of hot air from the government backing up their claims. I think it's a dangerous hydro policy that is impacting on rates consumers pay today and will pay into the future, it's impacting negatively on business decisions to expand in Ontario, and I suspect it's impacting dramatically on business decisions to invest in the province of Ontario in the first place. I worry about what



direct investment—foreign direct investment or domestic direct investment—in the province is and the trend we may see when you analyze the impact of the loony hydro policy on business placement.

You wonder too, if they had actually decided to put scrubbers in the existing coal plants, as opposed to carrying on this facade that they have a hydro policy—if, right away, Dalton McGuinty had invested instead in scrubber technology to clean up the coal plants, whether it would have had a dramatic impact immediately, today, on emissions. But instead, they followed a different policy and it has delayed the closure of the coal plants, as opposed to investing in clean technology today.

The Sarnia Construction Association recently sent a letter to the Premier, which they copied to all of us. I just want to read this for the record. It was co-signed by Jim Bradshaw, chairman of the Sarnia Building Trades Council; Ross Tius, business manager of UA local union 663; Ray Curran, chairman of labour relations, Sarnia Construction Association; and Andrew Pilat, general manager, Sarnia Construction Association. I'll just read some highlights:

"We are writing this letter jointly to ask you," the Premier, "and your government to reconsider your position on coal-fired generation facilities and, in particular, the decision to close Lambton generating station...."

"The limited supply of natural gas and the fact that gas prices are expected to remain high and volatile eliminate it as long-term solution to Ontario's energy problems." This is the submission by the Sarnia Construction Association in a joint letter. "Further, additional demand on natural gas will not only impact directly on the consumer but also the manufacturing sectors of the economy, such as the petrochemical industry, that are dependent on natural gas for feedstock."

Down a couple of paragraphs, they go on to say, "Current scrubber technology is highly effective in removing pollutants. The scrubbers at Lambton generating station are, for example, effective in reducing 96% of all emissions produced from burning coal. This compares favourably to gas-fired plants, which also have the same efficiency rate for emissions."

"To add further, it is a well-known fact that Lambton generating station is one of the cleanest and most economical producing power plants in North America."

They conclude by saying, "It is clear from these facts that a shift from coal to gas generation facilities would result in a significant increase in electrical cost to consumers and business in Ontario."

That's just one. There are letters like that from construction associations, from unions, from businesses, from chambers of commerce that address this issue head on. Certainly, the plants in Thunder Bay that are closing—due to high hydro rates, the notion of closing down the generator in Atikokan will be simply devastating to that community and to northwestern Ontario as a whole.

**Interjection:** That's where Yak is.

**Mr. Hudak:** Our colleague the critic for energy is there now to address this issue and to espouse the poorly

thought through policy of the McGuinty government in closing that station. It will devastate the community. The notion that pollutants from Atikokan somehow are impacting on us here in the capital is inaccurate; it doesn't happen, but the government spin would tell you the opposite. So I'm pleased that my colleague Mr. Yakabuski is there in Atikokan. I've enjoyed my time there in the past.

Certainly with the news coming from northwestern Ontario, from Atikokan or the layoffs at Cascades Thunder Bay and other plants that have said that, because of hydro policy and the expected high prices, they can no longer compete in our province, the devastation happening to our forest sector in northern Ontario, what remains to be seen is what hydro prices will be in 2006-07.

While the government has some technical aspects in Bill 18 relating to the Electricity Act, 1998, I think it's important for members of the assembly to register their rejection as a whole of the government's loopy hydro policy that is closing plants, that is punishing seniors and that has failed to produce improvements to the environment that could have happened if they had invested immediately in scrubber technology to help have clean coal plants today. I would say, too, as did the member who represents the Dunnville area, that the concerns about the devastation caused by closing down the Nanticoke plant are inconceivable, and I call upon the government to reject that initiative as well on behalf of my constituents who work there and care about that investment in the community.

I've had the pleasure of addressing Bill 18. I look forward to the comments of my colleagues. Thank you for your rapt attention.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Prue:** I listened intently for the whole hour to the member for Erie-Lincoln. He started out by describing quite well that in order to understand this bill you had to first understand Bill 197 and the other economic plans of this government. He went on to describe the \$13 billion in extra revenues that the Liberals have found since coming to power. But I think his most telling statements in that hour's speech were around the whole plight of many senior citizens. I read this bill and there is a little tiny provision—I'm going to deal with it in my own speech—for a maximum \$625 that seniors may be eligible for as a result primarily of federal largesse and the changes to the Income Tax Act which this province—along with every other province, I'm sure—is implementing.

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But at the same time, one has to look at what is happening to seniors across this province. I know in my own riding and in travels across Ontario I talk to a great many seniors. Seniors are justifiably concerned about the property tax increases that they are seeing in many, many municipalities. This government is not doing anything about it. In questions that I have posed to the Minister of Finance, all I get back is gobbledygook. Quite frankly, I



don't understand why this government is not taking action on a policy which you, prior to coming into government, said was wrong. You said that CVA wouldn't work and yet you know that many, many seniors today are at risk of losing their homes. The \$625 from this act is simply not going to get anywhere near. We know the problem that they're having with hydro rates. We know the problem this year that they're having to pay the full year of the health tax. If you really want to help seniors, you've got to do a lot more than what is contained in this bill.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** I find it quite interesting that particularly the Progressive Conservative Party seems to have a certain selective amnesia. It strikes me that at all times they seem to remember everything that happened in 2003 except the promises that they were making to the good people of Ontario on the campaign trail, the biggest one being, of course, that they were not running a deficit.

I know that our three independent economists who looked at our platform said, "They've got to be running at least a \$2-billion deficit," and we factored that in. I know that, toward the end of the campaign, I believe it was the Canadian Taxpayers Foundation that said, "Oh, my God. We think it could be \$4 billion." And what do we discover? Five point six billion dollars worth of deficit from the party of Mike Harris, who swore up and down that everything was absolutely fine.

That all seems to be forgotten when we look at the context of what has happened since. What has happened is that the deficit that we've inherited continues to go down, and—despite some selective accounting trickery, I say, from the member opposite—we continue to have that deficit go down while we're making record investments in the things that people elected us to do.

The nabobs of negativity over there, who sit around praying for a recession, hoping that a recession will somehow retrieve them from where they are now to get them over on to this side—and I say to the members of the new depression party, whom nothing would make happier than that somehow there would be floods of all this money: There has to be a balance. What we have is this government making investments in the future so that, as the economy sheds old jobs, new, great jobs in the new economy are being created. That's what this budget is all about, and I'm proud to support it.

**Mr. Flaherty:** I want to compliment my colleague from Erie-Lincoln on his remarks. The length of his remarks was outdone only by the cogency of the analysis and the thought that was put into those extended remarks.

On the infrastructure front, what we've seen from this Liberal government is nothing east of Toronto, and it's a great shame because it results in things like General Motors struggling in Oshawa. When we were the government, we brought Highway 407 to Durham region. Has it moved one foot, one inch, in the more than two years that these Liberals have been in power? Not one inch. Lots of process, lots of talk, lots of expensive consultants, but has the highway moved one inch? No.

That's the highway that General Motors needs to go over to Courtice Road and then go down Courtice Road because their trucks and on-time delivery are caught in traffic all the time. This is what they've done: They haven't moved the road one inch.

Do we have one more GO train going east? No; not one more GO train. Do we have the GO trains running from Union Station on the line that's there to Peterborough? The member for Peterborough is here. Do we see a train there? Do we see anything being done there? All the population growing in north Durham region and north Oshawa, around the new university that we started there—to Peterborough, not one train. We're going nowhere fast with the Liberals east of Toronto. This is a terrible waste of potential resources. Highway 401: one new interchange? No. We built three. We see no new interchanges, no widening of Highway 401. Do we see a bus route for GO buses? No. We see the GO buses stuck in traffic with everybody else. The Liberals have done nothing east of Toronto, and it's hurting General Motors. That's not good for Durham region, it's not good for Ontario and ultimately it's not good for our country, Canada.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I also want to be on the record as supporting the member from Whitby-Ajax and the member from Oshawa.

It's been said that the impacts of this government were evidenced yesterday with the almost 4,000 jobs—these are families being alarmed just before Christmas. I spent 30 years at General Motors and I know what this blow means, not just to the immediate and direct employees of General Motors but to the employees on the supplier side, at the dealerships and in the parts business. It's a devastating comment.

I think it's part of the energy policy and part of their tax policy, the health tax being one part of it. It's just costing more, and we're getting less in Ontario.

I listened very carefully to the member from Erie-Lincoln. I'm quite impressed with his grasp of the issues in this file. John Tory has made the right decision there.

One of the things he mentioned that I paid particular attention to was schedule 3, which is the community small business investment fund. Now this is wrapping up a fund that was allowing small investors and what I'd call new issues of stock, new capital investment opportunities for small business. What they're doing here is wrapping up this opportunity for small business investment. This is a shame in a climate where we know small business does create most of the economy.

The labour-sponsored investment funds provided an opportunity to invest, as the member said, \$5,000 to get the federal-provincial tax credit out of that, so that your net investment was quite small, actually, out of the \$5,000. In fact, I would say it helped to incubate many new small businesses and jobs in this province. I think it's a very sad day that they're now going to be changing the rules. It says in section 14.1, "a labour-sponsored investment fund corporation must pay a tax calculated under that section if the shares are redeemed, acquired or



cancelled by the corporation less than eight years...." They're giving them no time, and this means they're going to pay more tax.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Erie-Lincoln. You have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Hudak:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues. An hour is not enough for my comments and my colleagues' comments.

**Perth-Middlesex:** I think their only response is to talk about this deficit that they manufactured for the fiscal year 2003-04. But no matter what debate you lead on that, it still doesn't explain why in the 2004 budget you said that spending for this year would be \$80.5 billion and that revenue for this year would be \$82.1 billion. Those are your own books from the last budget and the economic statement. If you do some simple math, that should be a \$1.6-billion surplus. I can't understand this continuing inability of the Liberals to hit their targets. If they had actually stuck with any of their financial plans, to use this one as an example, they would have had a surplus this year. Nonetheless, you continue to run a deficit. In fact, this finance minister is increasing the deficit by 50% from what was given to him by previous Finance Minister Sorbara.

The other part I wanted to re-emphasize—and I thank my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka—is about the devastation across Ontario, particularly in northern Ontario, caused by the Liberals' wayward hydro policy and lack of support for the forest industry. Tembec in Kapuskasing—some 65 indefinite job losses; Bowater in Thunder Bay—100 indefinite losses; Smurfit-Stone in Thunder Bay—100 permanent losses; Weyerhaeuser, Sturgeon Falls; Neenah Paper, Terrace Bay. I mentioned Cascades in Thunder Bay, Norampac in Red Rock and Abitibi-Consolidated in Kenora—some 250 jobs lost there; and also in the south, Domtar in Cornwall. It's simply bad news across northern Ontario, rural Ontario and the province as a whole. I'd love to see a response on how they're going to turn that around.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

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**Mr. Prue:** I suppose I should be very thankful to only have 19 minutes of my hour today. I don't know whether my voice would have lasted for the full hour. I can do it; I'm going to try my best for the 19 minutes.

On November 5, this bill was introduced to this House. That was some three weeks ago. I looked at the size of the bill and I thought, "Whoa, maybe there's something in this bill. Maybe there's something in this bill that's going to deal with all of the problems that are existing in this province." I was thinking that maybe there's something in this bill to deal with poverty and the plight of poor people that the budget bill didn't address, or maybe there is something in here that some housing is actually going to be built; not the announcement that the minister made today, his brave announcement that 839 units of housing have been built in this province in the two-plus years of the McGuinty government. I thought

that maybe there's going to be something in this bill that finds money for rent supplements, or maybe there's something in this bill about the aboriginal communities, 51 of which have boil-water advisories; that maybe there will be something in here about special education or hospital care or agriculture or the environment, maybe about municipalities or even hydro rates—some of the big issues that people out there are talking about every day.

Of all the days to start this debate, what was the topic here in the Legislature? What were people talking about? They were talking about the thousands of people, potentially, who are going to be unemployed through the GM restructuring and what is happening at Cascades in Thunder Bay. That's the topic. It's the economy.

What do we have in this bill? I want to tell you, if there ever was a bill that's a cure for insomnia, it's this bill—23 sections—just to go through some of them, to talk about the arcane, to talk about the strangeness of the bill, the grammar, the incomprehensibility of some of the sections. In the part about seniors—everybody wants to talk about how good this bill is to seniors—I want to know how many seniors can read the longest run-on sentence I have ever found in all of my many years. It is, "Subsection 8(3.1) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:" It then goes on for a whole half-page with one sentence. I'd just like to read some of that. I don't think I can read the whole thing into the record because it is beyond arcane. Listen to what this says, if seniors think this is supposed to help them or if anyone is supposed to be able to understand it. It says, "Subject to subsection (7), every senior who, on December 31 in a taxation year ending after December 31, 2004, is resident in Ontario and resides with a cohabiting spouse or common-law partner may deduct from tax otherwise payable by the senior under this act in respect of the taxation year the amount, if any, not in excess of \$1,125, by which the aggregate of the tax credits described in clauses (a) and (b) to which the senior is entitled exceeds the amount, if any, by which 4 % of the senior's adjusted income for the taxation year exceeds \$22,250, that is to say," and then goes on to describe in, incredibly, more detail in the same sentence how that is calculated. This is not stuff that people want to read and can have really any hope. I'm not surprised that people are lost in reading government bills and government gobbledygook like this.

This bill purports to do a number of things, 23 in total. Just some of the highlights of the bill: the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act, amended retroactively. The first thing that grabbed my mind was, why would a government do anything retroactively? Then I remembered the very second bill that came before this House. The first one, of course, was to recognize the election, and the second one was an omnibus bill that this government put forward a few days after its election. It was an omnibus bill that did a great many things, including some of the seniors' tax relief. I also remember the the heinous, or most horrid, part of that particular bill was that it was retroactive. The part that the New



Democrats opposed, and that we still oppose, and the reason that we voted against the bill, was that you retroactively took away tax provisions that people were counting on and had been counting on for some 11 months. You took it away from them within a month of their being able to realize the bill. They had educated their sons and daughters under a system which we do not agree with; that is, private schools. We totally agree that the money should go to public schools and for public school funding, but you did something retroactively, something that should not be done in legislation, something that should not be done in any act of this House.

I looked here again and I see that you're doing the same things. It says sections 4 and 5 of the Community Small Business Investment Funds Act are amended retroactively to provide that the deadline for applying for registration of new employee ownership labour-sponsored venture capital corporations was August 29, 2005. So anybody who is involved in this kind of venture capital already has had the rug pulled out from under them. They had no idea, I'm sure, that this was coming. They had no idea on November 5 that this provision was going to be in the act, and there you've done it again.

If you ask New Democrats why we think that sometimes these government bills are not supported, you should look first to the retroactive provision that you seem all too intent to do without notice and without telling people who are going to be affected. This quite literally, to some people, may cost them much money. Had they intended to file, they normally would have had, through any taxation year, an opportunity to do so. If they were too late, if they didn't realize this was coming, you have retroactively stopped them from doing it. I don't know what happens to people who, some time between August 29 and November 5 when this was introduced, went ahead and put forward the funds. I can't find anything in this bill that says what you are going to do or why you're going to do it or whether you're going to repay them for any monies they may have lost. I think that is not what a finance bill should do and it should not put at a disadvantage people who are trying to invest and properly use their money for the benefit of ordinary people.

I went on to look at that same section, section 3. Tax credits for investments in labour-sponsored investment funds are being phased out after 2008 with no tax credit available after 2010. Sections 16.1 and 25 of the act are amended to reflect the phasing out of the tax credits. I have no rationale, nor have I heard any rationale from the government, as to why these are being phased out. They are often, to many working people, the only opportunity they have to invest in something other than putting their money in the bank. I don't blame most of them for not putting their money or wanting to put their money in the banks these days. I look down the list of interest, as I do from time to time in the weekend paper, to see what the banks are paying for people who put their money in the bank for safekeeping. I have to tell you, I keep my money in three separate accounts. I have a small account in TD;

I have a very small account in what used to be the Province of Ontario Savings Office, which is now called Desjardins; and I have a small account in CIBC. I want to tell you what kind of interest banks are paying today if you put your money in there. CIBC was paying 0.1% on a year. If you invested your \$2,000 or \$3,000 and you got 0.1%, after a year you would literally be getting about two dollars. So I'm not surprised that working people don't want to invest their money there. I looked at TD; it wasn't much different. I looked at Desjardins, and it was slightly better, but not much different either. So people who have a little bit of money, working people who want their money to gain some interest, to do good work with it—this money that was labour-sponsored went into a great many things. The building of co-op housing was one of the things that labour-sponsored funds were used for. They paid a higher dividend than the bank and you knew that if you put your money there you were getting something more than simply value to yourself; you were getting value to your community. All of a sudden, this has been cut out with absolutely no rationale.

I listened to the minister and to the PA to the minister, and I didn't hear any rationale as to why this is being cut. I'd like to hear some in further debate, and I'm anxious for some Liberal member to stand up and tell me why this was important to be done in this bill because, quite frankly, it boggles my mind.

**1750**

I went on to read some other sections. If you're not suffering too much from insomnia, you can read a couple of pages at a time before you eventually fall asleep. I got to the next section, which was the Electricity Act, section 6. Section 6 says, "The enactment of subsection 92.1(2.1) of the Electricity Act, 1998, ensures that tax payable under section 92.1 of the act by the owner of a hydro-electric generating station located in unorganized territory without a school board is paid to the province and not to the financial corporation."

I started to think, what does this mean? What is the province trying to do? What electricity companies exist in unorganized areas? The probable ones that immediately sprung to my mind were those four or five small electrical generating stations along the Albany River leading into Hudson Bay. I started to think, what does this mean? They are probably unorganized. I don't think there are too many towns around there. Have they not in the past been paying monies to go to the education system? If so, how much is involved?

I haven't heard any rationale. I haven't heard anything from the minister today, nor did I hear anything from the PA, as to why this is being done. If it is to give money to the school boards, if the electrical companies can be taxed a little bit, it may not be a terribly onerous or bad thing, but there certainly is nothing contained in the bill itself, nor was there anything said today, to justify this action.

I went on and saw something there that really twiggled my imagination and my hope. My hope soared for a few seconds when I got to schedule 8, the Gasoline Tax Act.



My goodness, have we gone through a couple of very bad months in this province and in this country with gasoline prices. I remember all the Liberals, when they were in opposition, and the five wonderful bills people put forward talking about how to reduce gasoline prices. I remember all the statements and what was being said, and then I remember, during these last couple of horrible months, with gasoline prices at \$1.20 and \$1.30 a litre and lineups at the pump, people fighting and angry, consumers wanting something to be done, that of all those five bills, not one of them was resurrected by a government that I'm quite sure could easily have passed what you said in opposition.

You have not only the legislative might, but I'm sure you would have had the full support at least of the New Democratic Party if you were to have done it. I can't speak for the Conservatives, but I think probably them too. But what did I find here in the schedule for the Gasoline Tax Act? This is what it says. What does this mean? Was this some great policy? Is this some new direction? It says, "Currently, under subsection 7(3) of the Gasoline Tax Act, the minister may suspend or cancel a designation or registration under the act relating to a person if the person contravenes or permits the contravention of the act or of a limitation attached to the designation or registration."

I don't know what that means. I didn't hear anyone speak about that. If it's some great big policy, how is it going to help consumers? I don't think it's going to help consumers at all. I think it's a little tiny arcane change to an act for some inconsequential action that is being taken out there, that the minister may not have been able to take someone on when he wanted to.

I went on and I looked at schedule 20, the Securities Act. You will remember that there was a committee that was struck to listen and talk about the Securities Act. I was on that committee and I think the committee did some good work. In fact, it was the first committee I was ever on since my election to this House where there was all-party and all-member approval. There was no minority report. There was no one saying they weren't going to vote for it. There was all-party agreement, approval, and a unanimous report and a unanimous vote recommending what to do under the Securities Act.

I looked here to see what the schedule to the Securities Act did. I have to tell you that I was somewhat disappointed, because what this act is doing I think runs contrary to the spirit and intent of the members who sat on that committee, and who recommended unanimously to the then minister of the treasury board. In fact, instead of making changes directly to the Securities Act to better protect investors, which was the recommendation that we made, the government appears under this section to be handing over the responsibility to the OSC to write their own rules. Investors in mutual funds need to have a vehicle to hold fund managers accountable, and this should be done through changes to the Securities Act, which we ourselves in this Legislature should mandate and should pass, not leaving it up to an unelected body like the OSC to make their own rules that they can

follow. I have to tell you that when I read this, I was somewhat disappointed. I thought, "Why is this contained in this act? What is in this act that would make people want to support it?" I went on and I looked.

Here's the Tobacco Act. I supported the government in their tobacco initiative. I was a little bit upset about how Legions were not given the kind of consideration that I thought Legion members should be given, especially in this Year of the Veteran, especially when so many of our Legion members who are actual members, not associate members or people who may get to join a Legion, but who are actual members who fought in the Second World War—I don't think there are too many left from the First World War—and had done great service to our country were not, I think, adequately consulted or grandfathered around this particular act.

I looked to see what was contained within this provision and, again, it was a lesson in the arcane. It "permits the Minister of Finance to assess or reassess a person under the act after the expiry of the time limit for issuing an assessment if, before the expiry of the time limit, the person has filed a waiver in a form approved by the minister." The enactment of subsection 19(3.2.4) of the act permits the minister to assess or reassess a person after the time limit if, before December 16, 2004, the "person provided the minister with a written waiver of the time limit." Again, I don't know what this means. I don't think anybody in this room, if you've read it, knows what this means. There has been no discussion of this.

Then, Mr. Speaker, if I've got time, I went on to the last section, section 23, which was the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act. In a nutshell, what it said was that it now allows two elected people to be on that board, one from the city and one from the province. That may or may not be a good thing, but the real problem with the Toronto waterfront revitalization scheme in toto is that basically nothing has been done on the Toronto waterfront since that day how many years ago when the then mayor, the then Premier and the then Prime Minister, all of whom are no longer there, stood there and said there was going to be a magnificent waterfront in Toronto. It has not happened, and there's nothing in this bill that's going to allow that to happen.

If it's now close to 6 of the clock, I will continue on the next occasion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of Education. The member has up to five

minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or the minister's parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes. I recognize the member for Haliburton—Victoria—Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton—Victoria—Brock):** This afternoon, I rose in the Legislature and asked the Minister of Education about a situation around a busing issue in the Carden-Dalton area of my riding. The member from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, and I have been bringing this topic up to the minister over the past year and have asked for his intervention in the fact that the two school boards, those being Trillium Lakelands District School Board and Simcoe County District School Board, could not come to a resolution so that the children from the Carden-Dalton area in my riding could attend the schools in the Simcoe area, which they have done for generations.

Two busloads of parents and students came down today. They travelled three hours to bring this again to the attention of the Minister of Education. They have put tireless hours into trying to preserve where their children go to school in the Simcoe district. That is their community of interest; that is where they go to work. This has occurred, as I said, for generations in our area.

1800

Now, there are boundary issues, I'm sure, in every school board, but in the last two years the two school boards have not been able to work it out. So I genuinely asked the minister, the member from Simcoe North and I, to please contact the two school boards and work this out, for the children's sake. Put the parents first. Unfortunately, the answer came back very political and not what should have been addressed, which is where the children go to school.

The member from Simcoe North has said many times that new schools and additions were built in the township of Ramara—Brehin, Rama Central and Uptergrove—so that they could accommodate the children from Carden and Dalton. This happened in the past few years; this is not new. The intention was that the children were going to be able to attend those schools. Some of the parents of the children who go to the schools actually moved to the area. They built on additions. They did it intentionally, thinking that their children were going to go to the Simcoe district school board schools.

Heart-wrenching stories—a lot of them left today with tears in their eyes, extremely upset because there was not an answer from the minister. I'll read from one of them. One of the parents says, "I am a concerned parent fighting for the right of our children. On November the 11th, I sat thinking of all the brave men who died to give us our freedom, our rights to breathe, live, learn and speak whenever and wherever, and now you're telling us that our children have no right to learn at the schools that the children from our community for generations and generations have went and graduated and built lives from the roots of those schools.

"I myself, and many parents and grandparents, went to the following schools and now our children go to these

schools. They have put the trust of their futures in us, in you, in their teachers. They have made friends that they will carry with them forever, as long as you don't tear them away from these schools. If you do, no one else suffers but the children. They will lose trust in all of us. They say that children are the future. Well, if this is true, which it is, then let's help them towards that future. I hope that all of you consider the children. That's all I ask for. Thank you."

This is addressed to the Minister of Education from Jennifer Black in the riding.

Minister, the parents were actually leaving here today saying that they're going to keep their children home. They're not even going to send them to the schools. Now, this has gone too far. I hoped the school boards had worked it out too, but they didn't. Is the result that the children are going to stay at home? Some of the children share a bedroom, and yet they take two separate buses from their driveway. They can share their bedroom, but they can't share the bus to school. That's a tragedy in a community.

We've been asking for over a year for this government to act, and we want action. Today, when I rose in the Legislature with the parents present, we hoped that we would get an answer from the minister. They told the minister that they were coming. We told him that they were coming. It was a friendly question, so this could be resolved, to put the students and the parents first.

I stand today in the late show to say that there was no answer forthcoming. I'm going to talk to the directors of education from both school boards again, because the dust needs to be settled and this needs to be resolved. The Minister of Education has this power. He needs to talk to the school boards again. I'm having this late show to say that I want a better answer than the one I received today. I welcome the comments from the government.

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** I want to acknowledge the member for Haliburton—Victoria—Brock and her sincerity in trying to work with her constituents to resolve this issue, because I really believe that she sincerely wants this to work out. That's notwithstanding the political comments surrounding her. I want to acknowledge that. I think I would say to the member, "You could have a very important role to play here."

As a former school trustee, I think it's really important that we recognize that school boards play a very important role in local communities. That's why, as a former school trustee, I wouldn't like to see the ministry taking a role where, really, a local issue should be worked out by school boards.

As you said, this situation has been going on for decades. It's been a co-operative situation, and now, all of a sudden, it's not. There's been some breakdown in communication. I'm not close enough to the issue to know exactly what that's about, but I am close enough to the situation to know that it's probably something that the school boards, if there's enough good will, could work out between themselves.



The other thing I want to acknowledge is the frustration of the families. I know how frustrating it is when families are caught between the politics of different bodies of government—different school boards, in this case. I think that we have to acknowledge that—

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** What are you going to do about it?

**Ms. Wynne:** Well, we have to acknowledge that those families need an answer from those school boards. So from our perspective, we would like the school boards to work it out. The minister said this afternoon that if they can't work it out, we'll send in a mediator and facilitate the communication. He said that.

But that's not the most desirable situation. The most desirable resolution is for those school boards to work it out and, quite frankly, I would hope that the local MPPs, before asking for a mediator to be sent in, would create a forum for the school boards. You've said you'll go back and talk to the directors. I think there's a role for MPPs to play in working this out.

I think the other thing that we have to bear in mind is that there's not just one voice coming from this community. There are letters that have been written to the minister on both sides of this issue. So there's a family that has said: "Keep in mind that these parents do not speak for all of us, even though they would like you to believe they do. I understand that some parents from this area will be attending the Legislature on November 22 to make their voices heard."

So we have to recognize at this level that there are competing interests in the community. That's why we have school boards. We have school boards to work out those local issues, and I think it will be a sad day in Ontario when we don't have school boards with the authority to work out those local issues.

Every time you draw a boundary—for example, as a school trustee, I would get calls from people where a boundary had been changed and they were upset because

they'd been on one side of the boundary and now they were on the other side of the boundary. There are always going to be boundary issues, and that is something that school boards need to take on as their responsibility.

Having said that, if these two school boards can't work it out, then we will send in a mediator, but I really hope that the members take it on as their responsibility to bring those directors together, bring those school boards together and find a solution, because, clearly, there's been a solution there for more than 40 years. So there really isn't much reason why there shouldn't continue to be a solution.

I hope that answer is what the member can work with, can go back to the community now and create a forum for the school boards to work with each other, and that the families will understand that the boards have the authority to work this problem out, that they really don't need to be petitioning the Minister of Education when they have duly elected trustees.

Remember, trustees in this province are elected by their constituencies. They have authority and responsibility that's aligned with that authority to work out these local issues. I don't think we, as a ministry, should be taking that authority away from them. In fact, I think we should be giving school trustees the responsibility and authority that will allow them to work out more of these local issues. So I would encourage the members to go back to the community, encourage the school boards to work it out. If they can't work it out, then there is obviously the option of a mediator, but I hope that the local community can come to a resolution before that needs to happen.

**The Acting Speaker:** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1808.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	<b>Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L)</b> Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
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Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L)</b> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)</b> Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelp-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh Sudbury	Brownell, Jim (L)
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)		<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick</b> (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)		Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton</b> (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation		Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim</b> (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George</b> (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones		Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto–Danforth	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Parkdale–High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard</b> (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Trinity–Spadina	<b>Arnott, Ted</b> (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Zimmer, David (L)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)		<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra</b> (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby–Ajax	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight</b> (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte</b> (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)		<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph</b> (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)		Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Vacant
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V.</b> (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	York Centre / York-Centre	
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York North / York-Nord	
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry</b> (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	York West / York-Ouest	
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J.</b> (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael</b> (L) Attorney General / procureur général		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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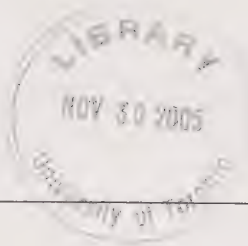
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Second Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 22 November 2005

Mardi 22 novembre 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président  
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 22 November 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 22 novembre 2005

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION RESPONSIBILITY ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ EN MATIÈRE DE CONSERVATION DE L'ÉNERGIE

Mrs. Cansfield moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to enact the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2005 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and the Conservation Authorities Act / Projet de loi 21, Loi édictant la Loi de 2005 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et apportant des modifications à la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité, à la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et à la Loi sur les offices de protection de la nature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I am pleased to recognize the Minister of Energy for her leadoff speech.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to stand in this House and speak to the energy conservation act. I'd like to acknowledge that I am going to share my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Peterborough.

This evening I would like to tell you how our government is building a greener and more sustainable energy future for Ontario, and about the many opportunities that energy is creating in Ontario: opportunities for a healthier and cleaner environment, opportunities for stronger communities and a stronger economy, and opportunities for everyone who is committed to a greener energy future.

Our plan consists of three key components: building new generation capacity, maximizing our existing generation and transmission assets, and creating a culture of conservation. In two years, we have taken decisive action in these three key areas.

We are working hard to build a brand new energy future for Ontario, one that achieves an important balance between supply and conservation. We are building new generating capacity with a focus on renewable energy

and cleaner power, and a mix of public and private sector participation.

We are maximizing one of our major hydro assets by investing almost \$1 billion in a new tunnel to supply more water from Niagara Falls to the Adam Beck generating complex. This will produce an additional 1.6 billion kilowatt hours of new clean electricity for Ontario by 2009.

We've made a bold commitment to shutting down coal-fired generation in Ontario, a decision we did not take lightly. A report was released earlier this year that clearly demonstrates the relationship between increased air pollution from coal generation and the impact on Ontarians. Here are some of the numbers we all need to consider when we talk about the true costs of coal generation in our province: 668 premature deaths per year, 928 hospital admissions per year, and 1,100 emergency room visits per year, and there is more. The report included a cost-benefit analysis of using coal technology that pegged the annual financial, health and environmental costs of coal-fired generation of power at \$4.4 billion annually.

Recognizing the true costs of coal to our health care system, our choice is clear. We're taking bold action to replace coal-fired generation with cleaner, greener, affordable energy. The effects of coal-fired generation are simply too great to ignore.

The third part of our plan is creating a culture of conservation in Ontario. We have set a goal to reduce Ontario's peak electricity demand by 5% by 2007 and to reduce consumption in our own government operations by 10% by 2007.

#### 1850

Since the last election, our government has taken decisive action to create a culture of conservation in this province, and some of these actions include, but are not limited to, the following: We passed Bill 100, the Electricity Restructuring Act, in 2004, which implemented the recommendations of the energy supply and conservation task force. We created a conservation bureau within the Ontario Power Authority. We appointed Ontario's first Chief Energy Conservation Officer. We enabled Ontario's electricity distribution companies to invest more than \$160 million for energy conservation measures for Ontarians. Through the Ontario Realty Corp, we have reduced electricity demand in the buildings they manage by as much as 7.8%, well within reach of our target of 10% by 2007. We're creating a net metering program

that allows farmers, small businesses and consumers to reduce their use of electricity from the grid.

That's in addition to the bill we have introduced, Bill 21, the Energy Conservation Responsibility Act, 2005, which contains four schedules. Schedule A contains the Energy Conservation Leadership Act. The next schedule actually amends the Electricity Act, 1998, to support the government's smart metering initiative. Schedule C makes the technical amendments that are required by the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, as a consequence of establishing the smart metering initiative as set out. The final schedule repeals a section of the Conservation Authorities Act to permit conservation authorities to market hydroelectric power based and created on lands under their authority.

A notice for proposal for the act was posted for public comment on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry on November 16, 2005—the proposal for the Energy Conservation Responsibility Act—and it was there for a 30-day comment period. The posting was made after the legislation received first reading. Nevertheless, this will also allow members of the public who do not follow events in the Legislature an opportunity to comment on this act. The Environmental Commissioner encourages posting on the registry.

Let's talk a little bit about what this conservation leadership act would actually enable the government to do. It would require conservation plans to be developed and posted by ministries, agencies and designated public sector organizations, such as municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals. It would require ministries and designated public agencies to consider conservation when making procurement and capital investment decisions. It would also enable the removing of barriers to conservation, or to promote opportunities for conservation, by enabling or mandating specific conservation technologies.

I will give you an example. In some jurisdictions, people cannot put out clotheslines. It's against a bylaw. We actually have to put in a piece of legislation that would enable communities to hang a clothesline, so that they could hang their clothes out to dry. I found this amazing when I first looked at it, because I thought there was nothing better than sleeping under a sheet that's been blowing in the sun and the wind for the day. It's so wonderful and fresh.

#### *Interjection.*

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** There are no diesel fumes. We talked about this as one of the barriers in the conservation action team report. I thought it was amazing that it's throughout this province, that we actually have to put in some enabling legislation.

We would also establish the requirement that persons selling or leasing a home would provide prospective purchasers or lessees with information related to the property's energy use so that people would actually know about the insulation that is in the home, the cost and the type of furnace or the type of heating that is there. It

would enable people to monitor and budget, or make a decision around the purchase of that home.

The legislation would also enable the Minister of Energy to establish co-operative agreements between the government and groups such as non-governmental organizations, sector associations or others related to implementing energy conservation. One of the organizations that comes to mind is the Conservation Council of Ontario, which has been a leading force for the last number of years in establishing programs that enable people to look at conservation measures in their homes, in their businesses and in the environment they live in.

When you look at the issue of sustainability from our perspective, it is a balance with your economy, your society and your environment. That concept of sustainability actually comes from Brundtland. If you remember Rio a number of years ago, people actually looked at the footprint they were leaving on the earth in terms of their policy decision-making. They came up with the concept of sustainability: You can't do something unless it's sustainable. That certainly is what we're looking at in terms of the conservation act. We want to enable people to make decisions that are good, sound policy decisions based on that concept of sustainability. It's a decision that will carry them forward into the future.

For example, if you are going to build a school for today, it must last for 20, 30, 40 or 50 years. How do you build that concept into that design process? I have to say that there are a number of boards around this province that, without this legislation, have already embraced that concept. I can give you Sir Sandford Fleming as an example. As a college in Lindsay, when they built their newest wing, they used geothermal. Or you could look at the University of Ontario, the new university in Durham, where their entire structure is based on the concept of sustainability. Even as time goes on and they have more opportunities, they will, for example, be able to put in a living wall. I'll talk a little bit about what a living wall is in a few minutes.

What we were able to do in the first part is actually enable the MUSH sector—municipalities, hospitals, schools, universities and outside agencies—to work together to promote the concept of conservation in all of their thinking. They would design their plans, they would have to post their plans and engage people in the decision-making around those plans. I can't think of a more incredible opportunity to engage young people in what we're doing around conservation than actually involving them in that process.

The second schedule enables the centralization of the functioning around the smart meter initiative. It's related to the collection, storage, management and transfer of consumers' consumption information and data. It would be a new, or possibly an existing, entity that would be designated by the ministry. It would be a smart metering entity. The entity would have various objectives: to plan, implement, oversee and deliver any part of the government's smart metering initiative and to collect and store information and data from a customer or distributor with



regard to the consumption or use of electricity, with exclusive authority, if permitted. It would establish, own or lease and operate one or more of these databases, provide information and promote non-discretionary data and information related to the consumption of electricity.

All too often, we put programs in place where we don't have the opportunity to go into the data and see whether or not these programs are actually working. This is one of the obvious needs within the data collection process. We can look at that consumption, we can look at the progress around the programs we've put in place and we can look at and analyze the data from a delivery, transmission or market perspective, and also for long-term planning. And, obviously, it could engage in procurement activities, as necessary, to carry out its objects. That's part of what we would call a data code. It would be licensed by the board and it would recover its costs through rates approved by the board.

The minister is also going to be given the authority to set the initial base design and the specifications of the meters. Remember, when we talk about smart meters, it's not the meter, it's the functioning within the meter. If you go back and remember, the meter you have now on your home is about 100 years old in terms of its technology. It's been around a long time. Another interesting fact is that when electricity was first designed, it was 12 cents a kilowatt hour, for anybody's information, which was 100 years ago. We've come a long way, haven't we? The design of the meter is simply a storage unit where the electricity goes through it and off to the utility. What the new unit will do is enable that information to be transferred back into the home, either using the Internet or an actual unit that you might be able to view, and it would give people the opportunity, based on time-of-use rates as well as just looking at it—what is working and what is not working in their homes. So it's an enabling tool to allow consumers to do more around their own personal consumption and activities related to conservation.

#### 1900

I know there have been lots of extremes around what it's going to cost or not going to cost. The interesting part is that when you go to the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, California, the data are conclusive: It makes a difference. Now, people will say, "That's in another part of the world. What difference does it make here?" What I can tell you is that with some of the pilots we've had here, in fact it's making a significant difference.

I can give you an example of a firm, Stratacon, that worked on an apartment building, a modest-income rental. They have actually had some savings as high as 38%. What they did was engage that community in the whole process of education around smart meters and lighting. I don't know if people know, but if you were to take four compact fluorescents and put them in your home—every home probably has somewhere between 40 and 70 light bulbs, and some have more, and there are about 4.5 million homes or units or apartments in this province. If everybody put in four, we could shut down one 200-megawatt coal-fired plant.

That's the difference in the cost of consumption between the old bulbs and the new bulbs, the compact fluorescents. Homeworks has done some analysis, and they have come up with statistics that are based on empirical evidence that show that over a seven-year period of time, the savings from the old to the new on three bulbs is \$201. So it is amazing. Plus they last 10,000 hours; you don't have to change the light bulbs all the time.

The other is the issue around light-emitting diodes, which are the holiday lights. If you look at them now, they cost somewhere between a quarter of a cent and half a cent per string. The old lights would cost you \$1.98 a string to run, plus the old lights are hot, so there's an issue of safety, whereas the light-emitting diodes are not, and they're brighter—I think they're brighter. So there are those opportunities for people out there to save a significant amount of money through education and by promoting their own conservation measures within their homes.

What we would like to do with this act, obviously, is that we are going to show people by walking our own talk. Within the government, we made the commitment to 10%, and at 7.8% we're almost there, but that's just the beginning of what we can do. Now we need to take those sectors where we have some participation—schools, universities, colleges and hospitals—and work with them to change how they use their energy and their consumption.

Again I give you a story, and it's verified, of a restaurant. That restaurant, simply by changing the behaviour of their employees—they haven't even touched their light fixtures, but just changed the behaviour of their employees—saved \$285 a month in their electricity consumption. It's things like when they cook. They were cooking their sauces at peak time, when they didn't have to. They were leaving the freezer doors open because they were scared that, if they closed, it was dark; they needed a light in it. Just by changing their consumption, how they used their electricity and their water, which was heated by electricity, they managed to save that amount of money. When the firm went in and identified additional savings, you can imagine how happy the owner of that particular restaurant was. But they also took those measures they had learned, that conservation, back into their homes, and that's the difference it makes.

That's why I think it's important for us to lead by example. In working through the different organizations—I can give you a couple of examples of what we've done with those organizations. For example, we met with the Social Housing Services Corp. These are 20 housing complexes and co-operatives right across the province that will lead to a centralized management service for 1,500 social housing providers, representing over 250,000 units of non-profit municipally owned or co-operative housing. We started out this particular program with 5,000 units. It was an extraordinarily successful pilot where we actually went in and worked to discover through audits what things we needed to do,



what things we needed to change and how we could engage that community in those changes. So it wasn't a top-down decision; it was, "How do we work together to make a difference?"

We have also been working on low-income, demand-side management strategies, which in essence are conservation strategies, with the Canadian Environmental Law Association. What we did was develop a set of proposed DSM initiatives that could be undertaken by local distribution companies on the conservation side, again leading by example, engaging that community.

Mr. Speaker, we know what happens in your community and what happens in mine. It's different from northern Ontario, eastern Ontario, southern Ontario and western Ontario. Programs need to be designed to meet those communities' needs.

A good example of that would be what was going on with Hydro One and EnerCan where they actually came together with Canada Mortgage and Housing and put up to \$3,000 in homes, recognizing that, yes, the furnace may need to be replaced, but replacing the furnace didn't deal with windows or doors that needed to be replaced, caulking that needed to be redone or insulation that needed to go in those homes. So for low-income, modest folks, they were putting in \$3,000 per home to qualified folks to actually make a difference on their energy consumption, working with them and teaching them how to sustain that. It had to be sustainable. There's no point in putting in the measures if you can't continue to sustain them all along.

That's the purpose of this bill. One of the things we wish to do, as I said, is to lead by example. We'll be able to put in the smart metering initiative. It will start with 800,000 homes by 2007 and go to 2010. We will work with the condominium owners. We will work with the community. We have pilots that have been extraordinarily successful all across this province with our local distribution companies, our utilities, who bear a very critical part of what we're doing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a pleasure to be able to speak to this bill, and I'd like to ask the parliamentary assistant to continue.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It is indeed a delight for me to have an opportunity to reflect a bit on Bill 21. I must say what an honour it is for me now to be the parliamentary assistant to the member from Etobicoke Centre, the Minister of Energy, who in a previous life was parliamentary assistant to the then Minister of Energy, who is now Minister of Finance. She did a remarkable job when she helped to pilot through Bill 100, which is now the basis of us moving forward with Bill 21.

I want to chat a little bit about conservation because I happen to think that conservation is one of the keys to Ontario's future. If we reflect a bit, we've got to change the attitude or the mentality of people in Ontario to embrace conservation as a way to help to reduce some of our electricity consumption. I think of the blue box program 10 or 15 years ago. It took a long time, I think, for the general populace in Ontario to embrace the blue box

program. For the longest time we used to just dump garbage into a hole. It was out of sight, out of mind. But we do know how detrimental that was to our communities in which we live.

We launched the blue box program. It took a decade or a decade and a half to make sure that people picked up on that. When I chat about recycling today to my son, who's seven, and my daughter, who's six, it's just second nature for them to look very carefully at packaging, newspapers and all that other material that we have in society, and they make sure they put it into the blue box.

Now we've got to do the same thing with conservation, to make sure that we become very aware of putting in high-efficiency light bulbs at every opportunity we can. As we're approaching the Christmas season, it's time for us to get rid of old lights that many of us have on our homes and install LED lights, which are very energy efficient and use a fraction of the electricity that was formerly used in the old lights that many of us have.

**1910**

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Leal:** The member from Niagara Centre said we are getting into the holiday season when people are putting up their lights to share in the Christmas spirit.

I just want to go back to the Minister of Energy's leadership. She set up the conservation team that looked at the various activities of ministries within the Ontario government and put in place a series of recommendations to make sure that government would lead by example, to make sure they are using the most energy-efficient activities within the ministries. Lights that didn't have to be on late at night are now shut off and we have the ability to tailor electricity use in many of our offices within the government of Ontario.

Beyond that, we're now seeing many other new public enterprises in Ontario, like new schools and hospitals, that are currently embracing the concept of energy conservation. I know that in my own community of Peterborough, on June 20, 2005, we announced that we were going to build a new hospital. Seven days later, the company that won the successful tender—Ellis-Don out of London, Ontario, is now building the new hospital in Peterborough at a very rapid rate. Inherent in that design is energy conservation so we can reduce dramatically the amount of electricity to be used in that facility when construction is completed in October 2007 and it becomes fully operational in the spring of 2008.

I want to chat briefly about smart meters. But first of all, before I start talking about smart meters, I want to salute the president of Peterborough Utility Services in Peterborough, Mr. Robert G. Lake. Mr. Lake joined Peterborough Utility Services in 1986. He will be retiring in March 2006. He spent 20 years operating the utility services in the riding of Peterborough, and I want to say congratulations to Bob. Bob is a fellow who during his time as president of the PUS in Peterborough was also president of the Ontario Municipal Electric Association. So he's a guy who has shown outstanding leadership in the field of local utility distribution companies and how



that is so important in providing electricity in many of our communities throughout Ontario. Under his leadership, about 15 years ago in Peterborough we introduced the "Wait till 8" program, a municipal initiative to encourage people in the Peterborough area to delay using the dishwasher, the dryer and other appliances until after 8 o'clock to take advantage of lower electricity prices.

Mr. Speaker, I know you're making notes there. Maybe you're going to send Mr. Lake a letter of congratulations next March when he retires as president of PUS. I'm sure he'd be pleased to get a note from you.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Why should he retire? You've got legislation pending.

**Mr. Leal:** Mr. Speaker, if I could continue on. I've got some interjections here from my good friend the member from Niagara Centre.

Why are we introducing smart meters to the province of Ontario? Smart meters will provide a key tool to allow individuals to shift their electricity use to off-peak hours, and they'll be able to track their electricity use much more accurately. We know that shifting to off-peak times will allow individuals to take advantage of lower costs. We must do that if we are to hit our targets to reduce generation at most of the coal-fired plants by 2007, with the additional operation to come out of use in 2009. The only way we can reach those targets—and we're going to reach those targets—is through a number of approaches. One of them will be through conservation and the other through demand management, which the smart meter allows us to do.

We had an announcement this week of a number of renewables, clean green energy, to provide supply in the province to help us out. Why wind energy is so important in Peterborough is because we have a large GE operation. Part of it is, of course, the nuclear products operation, and there may be some in Ontario who would like to see us lose those high-paying CAW jobs because they don't support nuclear energy. But I know there will be work now that we've gone ahead with the Bruce retrofit project. There will be those good union jobs in the Peterborough division, nuclear products, of GE. Secondly, in the other part of GE in Peterborough, they're actively working to see how they can build the component parts for wind turbine generation. We look forward to that generating new economic opportunities in the riding of Peterborough.

The smart meters will basically replace the current meters we have in place, at a cost of between \$3 and \$4 per month per customer. We do know that in a pilot project in the riding of my friend from Chatham-Kent, when the smart meters were deployed, they actually came in at one third of the estimated cost. So I want to assure individuals out there who are tuning in and watching us at about 7:15 p.m. on this day that while the cost of the smart meters may be between \$3 and \$4 per month, we do have information now that suggests they may come in under that.

There have been other jurisdictions in the world that have brought in smart meters. I think of California; I

think of Italy; I think of Australia. The Ontario government, through the leadership of my good friend the Minister of Energy, is looking at the experience in those other jurisdictions throughout the world to see how we can take advantage of those lessons.

The time-of-use price structure has different price levels, depending on the period of day when electricity is used. We have on-peak, when demand for electricity is at its highest, we have mid-peak, when demand for electricity is moderate, and we have off-peak, when demand for electricity is at its lowest. We believe that, through the smart meter project, with the first 800,000 to be installed in the province of Ontario, people will buy into this technology and look at time-of-use and really turn out and take advantage of those prices for the public that are quite a bit lower.

I know my friend from Durham probably is an advocate of that, and I want to thank my friend from Durham. He sent me a nice congratulatory letter when I became the PA to the Minister of Energy and told me to come by Durham and perhaps visit Bowmanville to meet the member's advisory committee on electricity that he's put together. I certainly indicated to them that at my first available opportunity I will go to Bowmanville and meet with the member's advisory committee. I know they're a very distinguished group of people who are involved in the energy sector.

The other thing about the implementation of the new metering system is that we're certainly looking at bringing new technology to Ontario and to Canada and at the real opportunity to create new jobs that we all want in our communities. We have a company in Peterborough, Carma meters, an exciting new company, a small business. I know my friend from Durham has met with the principals of Carma meters, and I've had the opportunity. It's a very exciting company with new technology. While they don't manufacture meters for the residential side, they are certainly interested in manufacturing meters for multi-residential dwellings and for larger commercial and industrial users. So there's no question in my mind that one of the side benefits of smart meters being introduced in Ontario is the opportunity to develop this new technology and create new jobs.

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I do know that these meters will be mandatory. They will replace the existing meters that we all have in our homes, multi-unit residential buildings, and commercial and manufacturing operations today. I want to assure people that Bill 21 will not create a grandiose and larger bureaucracy to handle this. The Ministry of Energy is a very lean ministry, in order that we can make decisions and provide turnaround as quickly as possible.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Leal:** I hear interjections from my good friend from Durham. I'm sure he'll have the opportunity to speak a little later.

I think it's very important that we hit our targets by getting these 800,000 smart meters in place by 2007, because, as I've said, this is certainly a key component of



our government's plan in energy to phase out coal power in 2007 and 2009 and to really drive home the fact that we need to have a conservation society—that we become more and more conscious of the precious resource that we have, the generation of electricity, and make sure we're using it in a very efficient and effective way.

We do note that implementing the smart meters and increasing energy efficiency will lead to dramatic cost savings for people in the province of Ontario. The return on investment, of course, will depend on individual use, but I can say that individuals will make a very modest investment to achieve, I think, what will be fairly substantial return.

In summing up, I think Bill 21 is a key part in the foundation of bringing about a very stable electricity system in Ontario. I know that businesses, commercial operations and even residential owners certainly depend on having a secure and stable supply of electricity. This government is moving ahead on a number of fronts to make sure that comes about. I'm very excited about Bill 21. I look forward to it going to committee, and I look forward to having quick passage of this very important piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech by the Minister of Energy and the member from Peterborough to do with this new energy bill which is being debated at second reading this evening.

A feature of the bill is, of course, the smart meter initiative. I would ask, and perhaps they can answer in their two-minute response, what the cost will be to the monthly bill of the users who are going to have these smart meters added. If the cost is, as I've seen in some information, \$8 a month, what sort of payback will there be for the single person who has modest electricity use at this time, or will there be, in fact, any payback whatsoever?

I would like to talk a bit about the big picture in the two minutes that I have for this comment, and the energy costs for families and for industry, particularly the forestry sector. We see the news that in the Thunder Bay area, the Cascades paper mill announced today at noon that it's closing: some 550 lost jobs, devastating for the Thunder Bay area. That's the Liberal energy policy at work.

Then we also see in the Thunder Bay area the recent news about the North American Palladium mine, which I had the pleasure of opening a few years back. It's about 85 kilometres north of Thunder Bay. There are about 60 people at the North American Palladium Ltd. Lac des Iles mine who are going to lose their jobs, this article in the Chronicle-Journal says. And what is the reason? "The precious metal industry is being affected by high fuel and electricity prices," just like the forestry sector. The forestry sector is being devastated all across northern Ontario with high energy costs and high delivered-wood costs. That's your energy policy at work in Ontario.

**Mr. Kormos:** I'm going to be speaking to this bill later on this evening. I'm looking forward to it. But in this brief two minutes, I'm compelled to note that the member from St. Catharines, the Minister of Tourism, Jim Bradley, is still in the chamber. He was here before 1:30 today; he hasn't left. It's now 7:30. I saw his staff smuggle in some Gatorade and one of those protein bars. He truly is dedicated to maintaining his seat in this chamber. He's not about to let anybody take his seat from him. To that end, he's been sitting in it for the last seven and a half hours.

I'm incredibly disappointed that the government, with all the fanfare about this bill, could only muster 40 minutes out of a 60-minute slot for a leadoff statement, and, at that, it took two people to do it. How many Liberals does it take to produce part of a leadoff speech? Obviously, at least two—a good thing for the parliamentary assistant. Once again, we're watching the parliamentary assistant doing all the heavy lifting. It's the member from Peterborough, the parliamentary assistant, who has to carry the ball. Does the minister want to do a one-hour lead? No. It's the parliamentary assistant who gets called upon to sweep up after the fact. But you know what? When this bill fails, the minister is going to be nowhere to be found. She's going to say, "Talk to Mr. Leal. I didn't have anything to do with it." When this bill is revealed over the course of time as nothing but a fraud, the minister is going to say, "Don't look at me; talk to Mr. Leal."

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** Thank you for giving me this opportunity, Speaker, to make some comments to the Minister of Energy and the parliamentary assistant to the minister. I think the minister outlined the details of Bill 21 very eloquently. Also, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Peterborough, did a great job. I want to tell the member for Niagara Centre that we divide the time because we believe in sharing. We believe in the democratic process. That's why we share the time.

This is a very important bill, because the engineer of the bill, the Minister of Energy, believes in this cause. When she was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, I had a chance to attend an energy forum in London on how we educate people, how we talk to schools, how we go to universities, to hospitals, how we go to many different places to convince them about conservation, because it's important and it's the right thing to do. This bill is not about a political agenda; it's about the right thing to do. I hope all parties will support the bill because it's very important—vitally important—to our communities across Ontario.

We've been talking about smart meters. I hope to get the chance later on to speak about smart meters and what people think about them. I know there's some kind of misreading or misconception or misperception about smart meters, but I want to tell you, this bill is the right thing to do.

I want to commend the minister and her parliamentary assistant for explaining to the people of Ontario the intent



of the bill, what the bill will do if we implement it fully, because it's going to conserve energy. We're going to save our environment. We're going to introduce green energy for the people of Ontario. We cannot do it by ourselves, but by engaging other people. That's why we believe in sharing.

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**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** I note that both the parliamentary assistant and the minister in their discussion of smart meters went into a discussion of their policy of coal-generating-station closures. We heard dates this evening of 2007 and 2009—2009 for Nanticoke and I'm assuming 2007 for the rest of them. I don't know whether that would be done before the election or after the election. The way the dates are being moved around, the new targets may well be for none of the coal plants presently in operation to be closed until after the coming election.

What I want to point out—and I'm not clear on what link they were making between smart meters and closing down 25% of the coal generation in Ontario. Smart meters may assist in a very small way in replacing, through conservation, some of that energy requirement. But I do want to point out to the last main speakers that we have a report from Energy Probe that came out in October. I think everyone would know director Tom Adams. Energy Probe took a look at 403 coal-fired plants across North America. The two Lambton units—these are the units that have both the SCR and the scrubber technology. The SCR technology was relatively recently installed by the previous government. The two Lambton units ranked in the top-10 clean facilities. As we know, Energy Probe has reversed their position on coal. They are not in favour of closing coal because of the import problem.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Peterborough has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Leal:** I want to thank the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Niagara Centre, London–Fanshawe and Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant for their comments.

One of the questions that was asked of me was, what will be the cost for the new smart meters? It is calculated that the cost of the new smart meters would be between \$1 and \$4 per month, per customer. But I want to reiterate that when the pilot project was introduced in Chatham–Kent, the actual cost of the smart meters was one third of the original estimated cost. So I think it's unwarranted at this time to be spreading panic throughout Ontario in terms of the cost of these smart meters.

We could get into a long discussion about coal and the merits of using coal for generating electricity, but time won't allow me to do it. I just want to make a couple of quick comments, though. If every person in Ontario replaced their existing light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, we could take one of the coal-fired plants out of operation immediately. When I made my remarks about the blue box mentality in shifting our thinking to go to a conservation society here in Ontario in terms of what we do each and every day, just going to those compact fluor-

escent bulbs would have a tremendous impact on the amount of electricity we're using in Ontario today.

I tell members of this House from all sides that we should be leaders in our respective communities and go out this very day and start buying those compact fluorescent bulbs, to show that we are leaders for energy conservation, and as we go into the holiday season, buy those LED lights, again to reduce the amount of electricity we're using.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my pleasure to comment on Bill 21. I think I'm just using my time here, but first I want to seek unanimous consent to stand down our lead speaker, Mr. Yakabuski.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. O'Toole has sought the unanimous consent of the House to stand down the leadoff speech of Mr. Yakabuski. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Yakabuski unfortunately is tied up. He's in parts of Ontario today—Atikokan, actually, and possibly Thunder Bay and other places. As our energy critic, he's doing an outstanding job trying to nurture back to health those communities that are suffering under the decisions of this government. Atikokan is one of those communities where there is an energy production plant which is being shut down by this government. It's tragic. All of us have heard from the mayor and council and the leaders in that community about the devastating impact. The power workers and others have united to send a strong message to this government that it's simply the wrong thing at the wrong time.

No one in all conscience disagrees with Bill 21 and its ultimate intentions. What is wrong here are the subtleties beneath the policy language. I want to start by saying that it's my impression, from listening over the last two years, that their policy on energy is this: You're going to pay more and you're going to get less.

Bill 100 was mentioned earlier. Bill 100 set up the framework for the changes in the energy sector under the Dalton McGuinty Liberal government. What they did, first of all, was a lot of consultation stuff, but really, quite honestly, they made a couple of reckless commitments. I'm going to hold up for the viewers who may be listening tonight election booklet number two. Election booklet number two—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** I've kept copies of it, yes. I've kept copies of this for members who want to see it. It's obsolete now, but I'll be using it for the next two years, the remaining time they have in office.

It says right here, on page 3—I'm going to read it. Dalton's picture is on it. It's been signed by the now Premier; he wasn't then. You can do a lot of things when you're not the Premier. With your indulgence, I'll just recite one of the promises they made—one of a number of promises. This is under "Clean communities." It's mostly the reverse of that, but it says, "No more coal: We will shut down Ontario's coal-burning power plants by 2007 and replace them with clean sources of energy," a very



laudable objective. I don't think anyone would disagree with that. This is about conservation, so I'm just going to spend a little bit of time on each one of the promises that you made and have broken. Because there is no one in this province, from any ideological perspective—the power workers, Clean Air, Tom Adams, all of them said you simply cannot do it. Yet you went ahead and promised it. You made promises that you can't keep, and that's really the theme that I am trying to keep to tonight.

I am going to break with a bit of tradition here in the speech that I have prepared. I have a prepared speech tonight, which is quite unusual, actually.

The other one is that they also promised to freeze energy prices—you promised that—at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour.

**Mr. Kormos:** Whoops.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Whoops—broken promise number two. *Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** No, we didn't hold you to that. You made promises that you had no intention of keeping. This is what hurts me and cynicizes the people of Ontario. They become cynical about the continuous litany of broken promises.

**Mr. Kormos:** What do you call people who make promises they have no intention of keeping?

**Mr. O'Toole:** They're called Liberals. The member from Niagara Centre asked me, "What do you call people who make promises they don't intend to keep?" I've just said the obvious word; I said, "Liberals."

So the framework here is flawed fundamentally. They promised to have affordable energy, and they promised to have this shutting down of coal plants. Anyone with any expertise in this area realizes that the energy produced from the fossil plants represents more than a third of the total generation capacity. Not only that, it serves as peaking power or baseload power, which can't be replaced quickly or cheaply. Most of the RFPs, more recently the wind generation, those contracts aren't at 4.3 cents per kilowatt; they are coming on market at between eight and 10 cents per kilowatt. That's about a 200% increase, or more, in the price of energy. Consumers and viewers tonight, these promises they made were both irresponsible and reckless, in my view.

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When I looked even further at Bill 21, I finally deduced that their conservation plan amounts to this. It may take me longer to say it than I have time. Remember I said at the start here that you're going to pay more and get less? Here is their plan. This may sound a bit—someone who is cynical or jaded might think this, but I'm just reading it from notes here. Their policy on conservation is sort of like this: You're going to have higher prices so that you won't be able to afford to use electricity. They're going to force you to conserve, and then they're going to have these smart meters to say, "Well, look, you should have used the smart meter." These are smart meters being introduced by a bunch of dummies. They used that on us in the Smart Growth plan, when we

introduced it. George Smitherman said that back in about 1998.

For the consumer in Ontario, what this really means is this: When they look at their electricity bills—and I have a copy of mine here tonight, which I'm probably going to disclose to you—the average consumer consumes about 1,000 kilowatt hours a month. Now, in that, you should note that the residential users of electricity consume about 30% to 40% of all the energy in Ontario.

The large consumers are the pulp and paper industry, the petrochemical industry, the steel industry and the auto industry. They consume 60% to 70% of all the energy. So the ones who are really going to be hurt by this are industry and the job creators of this province. This is a failed economic policy, and I'm alarmed that Mr. McGuinty or the current minister, and certainly Mr. Duncan, the previous Minister of Energy, don't get it.

In fact, if I were to look at my notes here earlier tonight, the Energy Conservation and Supply Task Force, which was formed some time ago, told them very clearly in a number of recommendations—an arm's-length consulted body told them—that this was not doable.

I really don't know where to begin, technically, but I look at the evidence on the failed policy, and it's not just me saying it. We have heard from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who's our critic for northern development and mines. He has done a remarkable job in quantifying what this has done to one sector. This is so important that I'm a little upset that some members aren't listening.

What it has done to the pulp and paper sector in this province has cost—he has talked today about one particular thing that he's on about, which is Cascades. This is a press release today from Cascades. It's from the executive assistant, and it says that the job losses are actually 550, including administrative staff previously omitted. Energy is the primary reason for this shutdown. This shutdown will likely occur before Christmas.

The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka is just leading the cause of a litany, a lengthy list. This is the list of job losses in just that one sector.

Now we're hearing about Stelco, Dofasco and, more recently, General Motors. I'm stressed about this, because energy is an economic policy. When Adam Beck invented or developed Hydro One, he used a phrase: "Power at cost." What he meant was cheap power to provide a reliable, affordable base of energy to power the industry of this province, the industry that made this province great. What we're seeing now is just the beginning of a long slide. Remember, the price is moving from four cents to eight cents. That's a huge whack. It's just unbelievable, and consumers—this is not a product like cable television, where you can decide not to use it.

In our home, as I said, we use about 1,000 kilowatt hours. Of that, there's very little discretionary use: about 10%. Yes, they should use energy-efficient appliances. We had a program under our Minister of Energy at the time, which was to rebate them the provincial sales tax on energy-efficient appliances, all rated by a national



standard, which was the EnerStar program. What did they do? They cancelled that plan so that people buying energy-efficient appliances were indeed being penalized.

So when a consumer gets a smart meter, which they say is going to cost \$1 to \$3 a month—most reports say it's going to cost \$8 a month—they're going to be price-takers. It's not price-elastic; it's price-inelastic. In other words, you're a price-taker. You have to light your home, you have to cool or heat your home, you have to cook your food and you have to wash your clothes.

The member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant will be speaking later about the impact on agriculture. Dairy farmers have to milk their cows at certain times; chicken producers have to provide heat—any livestock producers. There is all the energy use in those sectors.

We are seeing a cascading effect on the fundamentals of the economy of Ontario. In such an important policy area, I'm astounded that they don't get it. It's not unlike the Premier flying from Toronto to a fundraiser in Hamilton. They don't get it.

This is the economy of Ontario. This is my community. It's not just General Motors; this is Atikokan, this is Thunder Bay, and this is Timmins. I'm looking through here and I'm sort of saying: Tembec in Kapuskasing, Bowater in Thunder Bay, some 100 indefinite layoffs; Smurfit-Stone in Thunder Bay, 100 permanent positions layoffs; Weyerhaeuser in Sturgeon Falls, 125 permanent layoffs; Neenah Paper in Terrace Bay, 140 permanent positions; Cascades in Thunder Bay—this is a few weeks ago—150 positions and another 550 today. I don't want to be part of a doomsday scenario here. What I'm saying is that these are failed policies.

I'd like to switch now to what I consider to be the positive aspects of this. First of all, there's the type of meter they've introduced. According to experts whom I respect and listen to—and I encourage you to contact me, because I will listen—it's my understanding that the meters they have selected are not smart meters; they're time-of-use meters. All they'll do is tell you that at 11 you used 100 kilowatt hours; bang, it costs you so much. And they're going to a new rate system to confuse the consumer even more. They are going to have different times of the day where they're going to charge the consumer more. You almost have to be home to switch on and off the freezer or the air conditioner. Or—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** On the other side, they're commenting. So you are listening and you're an intelligent person.

But here's the deal: First, if you buy the meter, then secondly, you have to buy a piece of technology that will turn certain appliances off and on at certain times, so that may cost you a few hundred dollars. This is another example of no plan and no policy that is going to work. I'm astounded, quite honestly, and I'm not the minister.

I watch and listen as a consumer and as an elected person for the riding of Durham. Durham is the home of the Darlington nuclear generating station. I'm happy to say that I support that as a baseload of energy. I'd like to see another nuclear generation plant in the riding of Dur-

ham. I could talk about that site for a long time. It is well managed, and it's very productive. All energy has its issues; in this case, it's dealing with the nuclear waste energy.

But, there are other leaders in my riding that I feel it's important for me to mention. As the minister said in her comments earlier tonight—and it's up to me to be a voice for my community. In my community, they are leaders in conservation. Gary Polonsky is the president of the newest university in Ontario, which began under the leadership of our government, and more importantly, under Jim Flaherty, the member from Whitby-Ajax, with Gary Polonsky and other persons. UOIT built one of North America's largest geothermal well fields for heating and cooling. They had developed a system, long before Bill 21, back when we started to fund that university, and this was given a reward for excellence, recognized with the Ontario certificate of leadership in sustainable energy practices. This was given to Richard Marceau, the provost of the university, and Ken Bright, the manager of special projects.

So there are innovators in our society, and that's what they should be working with. They should be working with the local distribution companies on how to find good customer tools to shift load and shift peak, and that's really what meters do.

I also want to mention the Veridian Connections, which was recognized by the minister as one of the pilot sites for the implementation of the metering technology in Sunderland, just on the border of my riding. Their president and CEO is Michael Angemeer, Axel Starck is the executive vice-president, and I want to thank the entire team at Veridian publicly for their initiative. A very innovative local distribution company is doing a great job in trying to bring innovation into some of the solutions.

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As I said before, all of us, certainly our leader John Tory, are for innovation and conservation, but we're also for reliable, affordable power in the province. Now that can be achieved by incentive programs, through tax measures, as well as encouraging investment in multi-residential units like condominiums. I support that. I support, where there isn't any meter at all in the house, that they at least know there are tools that can help to shift load.

It's important for me, representing a riding that's very strong, to thank a lot of people who try to help me. I want to thank Pauline Storks, a utilities commissioner in the riding and a former chair of the Municipal Electrical Association, and Dave Butters, who's president of the Association of Major Power Producers of Ontario. They had a reception here the other night. I respect the work of the major power producers. These are the big consumers, and they are telling me, off the record technically—I wouldn't attribute anything to them except what I'm understanding—that high-cost power is making them less competitive. That, together with a higher dollar, which isn't Dalton's fault, essentially is going to make us less

competitive as a province. The province's economic policies today are playing themselves out, as I've said, in many ways; we're seeing it affect the primary industries in this province.

I also want to pay tribute to some of the work by the Energy Conservation and Supply Task Force. Their report is reading that should be commended to each member here tonight; it should be mandatory reading. The work was done by a number of experts and some of their names are important. If you look at the report, you'll find out that they're leaders in industry: people like Jan Carr, who's now part of the Ontario Power Authority, made representations to that committee; people like Peter Love, the conservation czar in the province of Ontario. I've not heard from Peter, but I know his intentions are good. Whether or not the minister is giving him the latitude to move quickly on providing some of the tools for conservation is yet to be determined.

Ultimately, with the little time I have left, their policy on conservation is this: If you charge them enough, they won't be able to use it. That's the conservation policy. If you complain, what they're going to say is, "Well, you have a smart meter. Why don't you use it?" You only have so much discretionary use in your household. Think of a retired couple on a fixed income. Are we expecting them to freeze in their home or die from heat in their home? Are we expecting them not to cook or prepare their food properly or wash their clothes? How much of the use of the energy—yes, they can put a few light bulbs in and I encourage that. I think any good utility, like Veridian, would provide incentives directly to get them to switch to being aware of energy conservation, but also encourage them to move in that direction.

One last comment that I want to make, and it's about an article from February 23, by David Wojick. It's worth reading; this is a very good article. It refutes the argument that coal and modern coal are not clean. This is simply true. I'm quoting here, and this is the last minute I have:

"Given the Ontario government's reliance on coal-fired power, why does the Dalton McGuinty government now suddenly want to turn it off? The stated reasons are that, first, Ontario has a serious and growing air pollution problem and, second, coal burning is the major cause of problems. Both claims are false." This is written by an expert, not by some politician. They said—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** No, he's not the person at Ford. This person knows of what he speaks. He is an engineer and energy policy analyst in Ontario and writes for *Electricity Daily*.

There you have it—much of the myth of this coal issue. The largest contributor to pollution in the province is the combustion engine, not the coal plants.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kormos:** I listened carefully to the speech by Mr. O'Toole, and I'm going to be speaking in around 10 minutes' time, so I really encourage people, if they're tuned in, to stay with us. But there are options. I was just

taking a look at today's television listings for 8 o'clock. I notice that on CTV there's *Criminal Minds*—that's a documentary about Conrad Black—and on CLT, yet another on *Crime and Punishment*; that's on one Chuck Guité. *CSI, Crime Scene*, is on Spike television, whatever that is; that's obviously a massive photo display of the Hollinger headquarters, where Conrad Black pilfered so many millions of dollars with the aiding and abetting—

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd ask the member how this makes reference to the member for Durham's presentation.

**Mr. Kormos:** To talk about conserving energy, had we locked up Conrad Black when we should have, all that energy being expended on prosecuting him and getting him that 40-year jail time in the United States wouldn't be expended. That's how we could have conserved a whole lot of energy, had we put Conrad Black and Barbara Amiel in their place. If Chuck Guité would simply show up at Millhaven and start serving his sentence now, we could not expend all that unnecessary energy on the trial that's inevitably going to find him guilty.

I'm going to be speaking to this bill in a matter of around eight minutes' time. I don't think I'll mention Tubby Black during the course of my comments or his theft of millions or the scoundrel Barbara Amiel, his accomplice and cohort, but Jim Bradley may.

**The Acting Speaker:** I find the member's comments to be highly objectionable, I must say. I would ask him to withdraw his unparliamentary comments.

**Mr. Kormos:** I withdraw, Speaker, but I'll have more to say in eight minutes' time. Count on it.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I always enjoy hearing the speakers when—we're not supposed to make reference to absences or anything, but it's very difficult for Premiers and leaders of political parties to be present at all times; I understand that very much.

I'm thinking of Pollution Probe tonight. My bet is that the leader of the Conservative Party will be at the Pollution Probe dinner tonight, yet what I hear from the Conservative members is an anti-environment message. As the leader attempts to be the downtown Toronto environmentalist and will kibitz with them this evening and be seen at the Pollution Probe dinner, my guess is that the people at that dinner tonight who are environmentalists won't be at the big fundraising dinner that the Conservative Party is having tomorrow night. I suspect it'll be a different crowd there. It will be a crowd that actually agrees with President Bush's view on coal, which we just heard enunciated by my good friend from Durham. In fact, that's exactly what President Bush has been saying, much to the chagrin of people from the Department of Environmental Conservation, people from the environmental movement in the United States and many members of Congress and previous administrations. But that is the view they happen to have.



It must be a dilemma for the leader of the Conservative Party, who portrays himself as a "red" Tory, a new moderate, to be wrestled to the ground so often by a right-wing caucus that still has its heart in the Harris regime, that still would love to have Mike Harris as leader and not John Tory. I'll be looking for the member's response.

**Mr. Barrett:** The last speaker was asking for a response and made mention of Pollution Probe. As I recall, a number of years ago we saw the creation of Energy Probe, and I can't recall whether Energy Probe was a spin-off from Pollution Probe—

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** An environmental group.

**Mr. Barrett:** Well, Tom Adams and Energy Probe are not an environmental group, is what I'm hearing from across the way. I will point out, and the member may recall this—I quote Tom Adams, the director of Energy Probe. He indicated just last September that he "admired the Premier's decision to close Ontario's four remaining coal-fired generation plants rather than gambling with 'cleaner' coal." I think that's the position you've just been suggesting now with respect to coal. But Energy Probe research and Tom Adams conducted a survey of 403 coal-fired plants across North America. Whether Tom Adams is an environmentalist or not—that's being debated back and forth—

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** He's an expert.

**Mr. Barrett:** He's an expert. I agree there. Tom Adams has changed his position based on this evidence.

I have a further quote from a few weeks later, based on new evidence, and referring to the coal-fired generating plants: "From an environmental point of view"—now, he may not be an environmentalist, but he is taking an environmental point of view; I'm not accusing him of flip-flopping—"it makes no sense to shut them down and import large amounts of dirtier coal-fired power from the United States."

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I'm so glad to be among all of my colleagues tonight. I want to say that I'm looking forward to the enlightening discussion we're going to have, following questions and comments, from my good friend the member from Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** Don't name any crooks.

**Mr. Bisson:** Oh, no, I can't say names. I forgot.

The member for Niagara Centre is next. Don't change the channel. You've been given what's going to be on television. What's more important is our friend Peter Kormos.

I want to say a couple of things, however, to this bill. We saw today in Thunder Bay, Ontario, yet another announcement of a mill that's shutting down in northern Ontario, and we know the big reason is electricity prices. The government this afternoon said it's not because of electricity prices but has everything to do with the mill not being one whose technology is up to snuff. The Premier is saying, "Oh, it has everything to do with the Canadian dollar." He blamed everything but his own

responsibility when it comes to what happens with electricity prices.

We have with us tonight two fellow Steelworkers, Guy Bourgouin and Robert, both of whom are Steelworkers from northern Ontario. Robert works for Tembec up in northern Ontario in Hearst. He works in the woodlands operation. Guy's the president of the local. They know why. They've had not one mill shut down in Opasatika, not two mills shut down because of Chapleau, not three mills shut down because of Kirkland Lake, but they've had a number of other mills shut down because of what this government's doing when it comes to energy prices and also the issue of forestry policy in this province.

I've got to say to this government, you'd better start taking these people more seriously. I'll tell you, the wrath you're going to see in the next provincial election, the voter anger toward this government on the issue of employment, will be something like you've never seen before. I caution this government that you've got a chance and you'd better take it. If you don't, you're going to be in trouble.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Durham has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I thank the members from Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant and Timmins-James Bay.

I want to go on the record by quoting Tom Adams, the executive director of Energy Probe, an energy watchdog. Listen up: "Consumers will end up paying more for the new technology but have little to show for it." He says, "Right now, most consumers pay about 50 cents a month for their current meters. The new devices will cost \$8, and the price will rise." He's an expert. He's been cited by many speakers.

Dave Martin—members should listen—the energy coordinator for Greenpeace Canada, echoes these concerns. Here's his quote. "Don't get me wrong. I think time-of-use hydro rates are a very good thing, and I'm glad these meters are going in, but smart meters are not a substitute for real conservation programs."

So there you have it from two people who probably would not support Conservatives, because Conservatives deal with the fundamentals, that first of all you have to have a strong economy. That's what we're concerned about.

Like the member from Timmins-James Bay and the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, I'm most concerned about yesterday's announcement of almost 4,000 jobs lost and the announcement from weeks ago of almost 1,500 jobs plus 550 more from Cascades today. This is about families and their jobs.

Yes, it's about the economy, and yes, it's about the environment. There are ways to clean technology. I've referred to an expert panel's report that said the main contributor to pollution is not the coal plants but the combustion engine. There was a report issued in 1994 and another one in 1996, which I have, that said they're not dealing with the real problem. This is a smokescreen.

This conservation plan isn't a plan at all. I'm disappointed, and I'm surprised that there aren't government members smart enough to have figured it out.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** Look, Speaker, you frightened me with your intervention a little while ago. I have some trepidation. I just want you to know, Speaker, that should you feel inclined to give me guidance at any point during the next 20 minutes, feel free. I appreciate your counsel.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kormos:** My apologies. We need, of course, unanimous consent to stand down Mr. Hampton's lead, because he can't be here tonight.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to stand down the NDP leader's lead? Agreed.

The member for Niagara Centre has the floor.

**Mr. Kormos:** See what happened? You rattled me. I was supposed to ask for that unanimous consent at the beginning, but I was distracted. Now I'm suffering anxiety about making sure that I please you, that I don't run afoul of the rules. I understand now that I can't talk about crooks during the course of my debate. I can't refer to any member of the Canadian Senate. I can't refer to Conrad Black, who is alleged to have ripped off millions of dollars from the shareholders of Hollinger.

This bill is truly remarkable. I tell you, I have never seen a piece of legislation that bears the fascinating—this is a Ripley's Believe It or Not moment. This is something that those guys down in Niagara region—multi-millionaires; the inventors of Trivial Pursuit—may well want to include in their politics version of Trivial Pursuit. Legislation, laws, tend to either prohibit doing something or require the doing of something. Do you understand what I'm saying? "It is forbidden to exceed the speed limit." "You are required to stop at stop signs." That's law. In all of the bills that we've considered here, over the course of three different governments that I've had the opportunity to serve, that's what legislation does. But Bill 21—consider.

I turn to schedule A. Does the bill say that there "shall" be regulations requiring persons etc., etc. "to provide such information" in the interests of conservation? It says "may." That's section 2. Next section, section 3: "may." Section 4: "may." Section 5: "may." Section 6: "may." Section 7: "may." Section 9: "may." Section 10: "may."

We move to schedule B: "To accomplish the government's policies in relation to its smart metering initiative, the minister, (a) may...; (b) may...; (c) may...; (d) may...." There's not a "shall" or a "shall not" in this book. "The minister may direct the smart metering entity...." "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations...." If this government had written the 10 commandments, it would say, "Maybe you want to honour your father and your mother." It would say, "Maybe you shouldn't covet your neighbour's ass."

Mind you, there are going to be people who love this kind of legislation. Can you imagine an income tax act

that was prepared by this government? "Citizens may pay income tax." It's sort of the honour system: "You may."

**2010**

This is remarkable. Read the bill. It's not a long bill. There's not a "shall," not a "shall"—I think there's one "shall." That's like your House leader saying, "You may vote for this bill," when it comes to a vote on second reading. "You may do House duty tonight." This is incredible. This is a plan?

If these were directions to Peterborough, parliamentary assistant, you'd be up near Sudbury, because it would say, "You may turn right, but then again, you may turn left," or "You may decide to put the Hudson in reverse."

If MapQuest wrote directions like this, there would be tourists climbing all over each other's backs in Niagara Falls, thinking they were in Orlando, and people all over Whistler, B.C., thinking that they were in Montreal.

What an irresponsible thing to do. What an incredibly ineffective position for this government to take.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Talk about Conrad Black again, because that's more interesting.

**Mr. Kormos:** Rosario Marchese wants me to talk about Conrad Black. His interjection is now on the record, as Mr. Marchese says. I responded to him; hence, he's now on the record. It's more like, "My Lord, Babs, I think I might go to jail."

I'm sorry. It's unfair, because he's only alleged to have committed a crime, right, Speaker? He's only alleged to have stolen millions and millions of dollars. Barbara Amiel is only alleged to have bought millions of dollars worth of Louis Vuitton purses down on Park Avenue in New York City. And my Lord Black is only alleged to have spent how many hundreds of thousands of dollars of Hollinger money on Babs' birthday party? Did Alan Eagleson only allegedly rip off all of those hockey players?

**Mr. Marchese:** But he went somewhere.

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, no, I think not. He did time.

John Roth from Nortel only allegedly drove Nortel into the ground, taking with him millions upon millions upon millions of dollars, leaving so many senior citizens, your parents perhaps, with their investment plans bankrupt.

Tubby Black may or may not show up at his Chicago court hearing.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Did he show up or not today?

**Mr. Kormos:** No. He was a no-show.

Where I come from—

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm wondering how it pertains to Bill 21.

**Mr. Kormos:** Speaker, you're right. You're 100% right. I allowed myself to get distracted, and I apologize to you, Speaker, because I know that that's a very troubling thing for you. I appreciate your mentoring. You have this avuncular attitude toward me, and look, I'm so grateful to you for it.



Let me tell you this: Down where I come from, the skyrocketing, out-of-control, upward-spiralling electricity prices are what concern people. As Howard Hampton has had occasion to say so many times, the utilization of electricity is increasingly inelastic. Smart meters—what do you do? You give your spouse a nudge at 2 in the morning and say, “Honey, it’s time to plug in the fridge”? Do we tell people living in homes that are forced-air heated, with the electric fan—a major electricity consumer; after the fridge that furnace fan is the second-largest single electricity consumer—“I know it’s February and it’s minus whatever outdoors, but what the heck, turn the furnace off for a day”? Or, once again, nudge, nudge, 2 a.m. in the morning, “Honey, do you want to go and turn that furnace switch back on?”

People are already incredibly cautious about how they use electricity. But to talk about this “maybe, maybe not” bill, which has no substance—there is nothing in here that talks about what kind of conservation programs this government is proposing.

**Mr. Marchese:** Smart meters—that’s it.

**Mr. Kormos:** Smart meters, which aren’t so smart and which I predict will probably not be made in Canada, never mind Ontario. There is a fortune that’s going to be made in the installation of them.

I tell you that the concern out there on behalf of folks is, one, meaningful standards in this—let me give you but one example; instead of this disgusting, pathetic, embarrassing, hollow, “maybe, maybe not” bill, a building code amendment as simple as this. Hear me out. I live in a 100-year-old house. So I’m crawling up in the attic, because to install a ceiling fan you need an electrical box and bracket that will support the weight of the fan. If you as a government amend the building code so that every new house has to have ceiling light fixtures that are of the type and style that can support the weight of a ceiling fan, you will have done far more in one sentence than this whole bill will do in months and years—as simple as that. We all know, of course, that a ceiling fan takes far less electrical energy than does air conditioning. Quite frankly, in most of Ontario, for most of the summer, a ceiling fan is adequate and will provide the comfort and relief that people want.

Those electricity prices that the government promised it was going to contain, that the Liberals promised they were going to contain—as Mr. O’Toole has said, what do you call somebody who purposely makes a promise they have no intention of ever keeping? You don’t call them people who are misleading. No, you don’t have to call them that. You don’t have to call them liars. You don’t have to call them prevaricators. You don’t have to call them mendacious. What do you call people who make promises they don’t intend to keep? As Mr. O’Toole said, you call them Liberals.

Let’s take a look at the impact of the Liberal ever-rising hydroelectricity prices in this province on the welfare of folks, their families and our communities, like our communities in St. Catharines, Niagara and Oshawa. Make no mistake about it. The thousands of jobs that

were announced—finished—gone today, in Dalton McGuinty’s Ontario, at GM plants in St. Catharines and Oshawa, are in no small part due to, among other things, the monumental increases in electricity costs. I, for the life of me, cannot understand why the Premier of this province does not regard that as a crisis.

Do you know what it means in small- and smaller-town Ontario to lose even 25 or 30 jobs, never mind 100 or 1,000 or 3,000-plus like in Oshawa? It is devastating. Within days, small business begins to feel the impact. The little shops, the little restaurants, the little delis and the little furniture stores—within days. When you take away those jobs—and don’t give me this garbage about attrition. We’re talking about jobs being stolen. Those jobs are probably never going to be restored.

**2020**

Let’s take a look at the multiplier effect. We know that for every auto job, there are seven other jobs—and I say to you that’s in addition to the auto parts industry, which, notwithstanding what some may well have said, is reeling in this province.

I’ll tell you what it means. I want to tell you about a fellow down in St. Catharines, Michael Andrade. If you’re ever in St. Catharines, you’ve got to stop by his restaurant, the Cool Runnings Eatery. It’s at 109 Welland Avenue, right across from the Beer Store on Welland Avenue. Mr. Bradley, is it the Rice Bowl? Is that the restaurant in that same plaza? The Rice Bowl is still there? Right across from the Rice Bowl, where the Rice Bowl plaza and the Beer Store are, on the other side, at 109 Welland Avenue, is Michael Andrade’s restaurant, Cool Runnings Eatery. He used to have a much smaller place up by the synagogue, just up the road from there in St. Catharines, and it was just a little two-table place in the back of a small Caribbean grocery store.

I’ve got to tell you, Cool Runnings Eatery, on Welland Avenue in St. Catharines, has some of the best Caribbean food I’ve ever tasted, and I eat a lot. I’m a big fan of food. I think that’s reasonably obvious to a whole lot of people. But the food is just outstanding. From the small little two-table operation he had up by the synagogue, he’s now moved into this new operation. There’s beautiful parking in front; not on-street parking, but off-road parking. I was in there just a couple of weekends ago. Jim Bradley, in whose riding Michael Andrade’s restaurant, the Cool Runnings Eatery, is located, is eager to get there. I particularly am a fan of the oxtail and the curried goat. I just think they’re delightful. They also have other things that I’ve tasted on the menu: the red snapper, the kingfish, the classic rice and beans, of course an array of hot sauces, ranging from hot to hotter and hotter, and Caribbean beer and Caribbean soft drinks. And there’s Michael Andrade, working hard—working real hard. He works long days. They’re open till 10 every night, the Cool Runnings Eatery.

With his girlfriend, Yvette Cousins, and his daughters, Dalia and Isabelle, these people serve some of the best food you’re going to find in Ontario. They do. And the prices are embarrassingly cheap. You’re not going to get



fed less expensively. It's all quality food; everything is prepared on the premises. There's none of this stuff where it's prepared by some food supplier and then frozen and delivered to the restaurant.

I'm a big fan, as you may well be able to tell, of Michael Andrade and the Cool Runnings Eatery, which I commend to anybody, at 109 Welland Avenue in St. Catharines. I urge people who have never had Caribbean food to drop by, and for those who have had Caribbean food, Michael Andrade at the Cool Runnings Eatery is going to top anything you've ever eaten anywhere else: jerk food, and every once in a while a special, something unique, and for somebody like me, something entirely novel, but inevitably good.

Here's a small restaurateur who has worked real hard producing the finest food product that anybody could ever be asked to produce. He's Jamaican-born; he's an immigrant—hard-working, like immigrants tend to be, sacrificing. The elimination of GM jobs in St. Catharines, smaller-town Ontario that it is, the elimination of a few hundred jobs at that west-side plant, is the equivalent of the elimination of 10,000 jobs, I say to you, in a huge metropolitan place like Toronto; it is. The impact is immediate. I just hope that small businesses, small entrepreneurs, those hard-working folks like Michael Andrade and his business, the Cool Runnings Eatery, which suffer from the high electricity prices in their own right—they have to keep coolers. You can't let food go bad. The smart meter is of no use. It's not a matter of saying, "Well, today's Tuesday. We'll let the meat go bad and turn the cooler off, but on Wednesday we'll plug it back in." It doesn't work that way. Sorry. It simply doesn't work that way when you're a restaurateur or running a deli. A place like Celi and Presti, down in Welland: I've talked about those good folks, the Ramundo family, so many times. You can't plug and unplug the freezer. You've got customers coming in. You can't decide, "Oh, well, we'll not air condition the joint today," even though it means that customers on a hot, sweltering summer day are not going to sit in and enjoy your services.

This government, with its head in the sand, pretends there's no crisis. And I say to you, Speaker, New Democrats know there is. I'm afraid. I'm fearful. We don't need this kind of fluff from these guys, this "maybe, maybe not" bill. We need real plans. Let's see them, Liberals.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's always a pleasure to follow my colleague from Niagara Centre. After all, when you follow the member from Niagara Centre, who needs cop shows like CSI? Who needs hockey games with recycled stars? The real-life drama is right here in the Ontario Legislature.

We're talking about energy conservation here, just in case anybody has forgotten. Now, most of us, as baby boomers, became familiar with energy conservation as children. How did we become familiar? When we left the room as children, our parents probably yelled at us,

"Turn out the light." It turns out that that Depression-era mentality, that frugality that we grew up with, was also a far-sighted conservation measure. So what started out as an admonition from our parents became a necessary science.

Our newer appliances in our homes allow such things as dishwashers to be turned on so that you can set them to come on after you go to bed. Programmable thermostats allow homeowners to reduce their energy consumption during peak hours. You let your home get cooler in the fall and the winter and maybe a little warmer in the spring and the summer when you're not in it. New compact fluorescent bulbs last for years. They light a room with the same intensity; they consume a small fraction of the energy.

My home has had a programmable thermostat for more than 10 years. I've used compact fluorescent bulbs for several years and I upgraded most of my appliances. You know what, Speaker? It really works. My energy consumption has dropped. By the way, my home in Churchill Meadows in Mississauga was the first in Churchill Meadows to have a new Enersource smart meter. Energy costs may be going up, but a little bit of good sense can keep your costs down.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** So much of what this Liberal government does is public relations fluff, and we see it in so many areas. You know, Mr. Speaker, when you get up and express concern, as my colleagues have and as the NDP House leader has put his concerns on the record, we get accusations from the Liberal government. We heard the Minister of Tourism, and this is so typical of Liberal reaction to any kind of criticism from the opposition or others in the public. They try to tar you. They suggest that you're against the environment, in this situation. We're talking about the implications of this legislation and whether or not it is going to have any meaningful impact in terms of energy conservation. They try to suggest, "You are against the environment if you are against our legislation."

We see it in crime legislation or crime initiatives. If we suggest something with respect to what we believe could be helpful in terms of alleviating crime, we get accused of being a certain type of individual. The same thing happens when legitimate questions are asked about language policy: Those kinds of accusations are made by Liberals and some of their fellow travellers in the media. It's regrettable and certainly it's offensive to most Canadians and most Ontarians. But that is a feature of liberalism in this country, I'm afraid.

You know, affordable and reliable electricity has been a hallmark of economic development policy in this province by governments of all political stripes. That is now in jeopardy. We know it. We see it every day with the plant closure announcements that are coming forward, even though the Premier gets up and says, "Smile. Be happy. Nothing's wrong. It's just a minor adjustment. Forget about the families and the people who are going to lose their jobs." This is a major concern. We should all



be concerned about it and the Liberal government should be responding in an appropriate way.

2030

**Mr. Marchese:** I congratulate the member for Niagara Centre for pointing out the obvious, because he's read the bill. Most of the Liberal members, I'd wager, have not, and that's why they applaud any Liberal speaker who stands up.

Just by the mere title, it ought to make people suspicious. It enacts the Energy Conservation Leadership Act. This is reminiscent of so many bills that the Tories used to introduce when they were in power. I always used to say beware of the title, because what it contains on the outside belies what's really inside. That's what the member from Niagara Centre has done.

This bill permits, by regulation, cabinet to remove barriers to energy conservation, goods, services and technologies—permits. By regulation, cabinet can require public agencies to develop energy conservation plans in accordance with criteria set out in the regulations. By regulation, cabinet can require government agencies to consider energy conservation and energy efficiency as they procure goods and services and when making capital investments. All of the language speaks to “can” and “may,” as the member from Niagara Centre indicated, and it doesn't require anybody to do anything.

So when the Liberals stand and say how revolutionary this bill is and how far advanced they are by way of energy efficiency and energy conservation, they're not doing one thing. They're not dealing with the building code at all, to amend it to require R2000, the Canadian building improvement program or equivalent energy efficiency program. The Planning Act should be amended to permit municipalities to make energy efficiency design requirements a condition of planning and site approvals for new development. And we're not doing anything that they're doing in Quebec, where they're retrofitting so many buildings that are using inefficient energy such as hydro. This is the kind of stuff we need to be talking about, and this bill does nothing of it, which is what the member for Niagara Centre said.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe we have time for one more question or comment.

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I wish to speak in favour of Bill 21. Contrary to the member from Niagara Centre, I see merit in the language that the bill is using. The word “may” applies to regulations and that is proper; that is the intent. In fact, this bill, when second reading is voted on, will be sent to committee. Surely the opposition will have an opportunity to change wording if they see merit. I would offer that the opposition parties would see merit in the minister using that language so that they have a better opportunity to make changes.

Having said that, though, what this bill really does is allow the creation of a new culture of conservation in Ontario. This is what we really need. For instance, there is nothing better that we can do than to reduce consumption of energy. In addition to that, as the member from

Spadina will appreciate, if we use energy at a specific time, it also helps us reduce consumption.

Of course, talking about smart meters, I am pleased to tell the member from Spadina that one of those companies that will be producing smart meters happens to be located on Racco Parkway in Thornhill, and I am very, very pleased that they will be able to create jobs—jobs that the opposition keeps speaking of. Yet when we try to create clean jobs, high-technology jobs, jobs that will pay good salaries, jobs that will stimulate the economy in Ontario and pay taxes, the opposition disagrees. I'm lost on this one.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Niagara Centre has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Kormos:** First, I want to say to the member for Thornhill, Mr. Racco, who acknowledges that he's lost, that we understand, and if we can be of any help, you just call, just let us know. Look, it's late in the evening, and I appreciate that when you say you're lost, we'll be more than pleased to light some candles for you and lead you out of the darkness, which is where this province is going to be plunged, into darkness.

Let's make this clear observation: Nothing, nothing, zip, zero, nada, nothing in this bill talks about building code amendments. Some of them are so obvious, and that would be, quite frankly, such an interesting proposal and debate. We talked about the requirement that all new home building have electrical light sockets in the ceiling of the type that are designed to support ceiling fans as well. We had a fascinating article just recently, in terms of house design and the phenomenon of what's called thermal bridging, about the over-utilization of two-by-fours or two-by-sixes, because every time you've got a stud, you don't have insulation, and that literally transmits the heat out and the cold in. I have read fascinating stuff about basement construction and design: the new requirement that all new home construction be two-by-six, rather than even permitting two-by-four, which is certainly no more expensive, as I read in these articles, when you talk about the fact that you can have wider spaces between your vertical studs on a two-by-six framing rather than two-by-fours. You end up at least with the same cost, probably cheaper.

That would be a plan, but that's not what the government is proposing. This is an embarrassment from Dalton McGuinty's Liberals.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Ramal:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity again to speak. This time I have more time to speak about Bill 21, the Energy Conservation Responsibility Act. I was privileged and honoured to listen to the Minister of Energy for almost half an hour and also to listen to her parliamentary assistant, the member from Peterborough, talking about the bill, about the important elements of the bill. I was totally convinced of the importance of this bill, unlike the opposition, who don't care about conservation, who don't believe we have a duty, a responsibility to educate the public, to create some kind of culture, a culture to conserve hydro, conserve electricity, because



we know the demand is huge and we don't have enough capacity to fill that demand.

That shortage of capacity was created by the negligence of the past government, who for eight years didn't pay attention to creating more energy and electricity in the province of Ontario. That's why our target now in this bill is trying to educate the people of this province to conserve, to give us the chance and ability to create more and build more facilities to fill our demand in this province.

I'm not just talking about the past government. When I go back to the NDP time, the members standing up tonight speaking about this bill, speaking about conservation, they don't care about conserving energy in this province. When in government back then, instead of connecting us with Manitoba electricity, they diverted money to invest in the rain forest in—what do you call it?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** Costa Rica.

**Mr. Ramal:** In Costa Rica. Investing in our own forests was important, but we don't have energy today. Later on, 15 years later, we don't have energy. That's why we had the blackout in 2003.

This bill, and this minister, believe in conservation because it's the right thing to do in this province, because it puts us in the right direction to protect our environment, gives us a chance to participate. All of us as Canadians, as Ontarians, have a duty to help, to be a part of this task force to conserve hydro.

I had the chance, as I mentioned before, to attend an energy forum with the minister, and she was excellent. She travelled the province of Ontario when she was a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy to educate people, stakeholders, schools, universities. She went to the malls, talked to all the people who entered the malls about the importance of conserving energy and explained which lighting we have to use. She explained about the technology, important technology to help us to reduce our consumption of hydro.

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**Mr. Berardinetti:** The Christmas lights.

**Mr. Ramal:** For instance, the Christmas lights. If we use LED, it will give us the same lighting and the costs will be about 1.5%; only 1.5%. They also don't create any heat, which might cause a fire. They're safe and also give us enough light, maybe more light, and the cost will be 1.5% only. Creating a culture of conservation is important.

I want to give you an example about London—Fanshawe, about London in general. The Thames Valley board, by following in the direction of the Minister of Energy, was able to save \$2 million on energy by changing light bulbs, boilers, weatherstripping in the doors, ceilings—many different elements that gave them the ability to save \$2 million, which went back into the budget so they can use it for different things. It's a very important step.

I know many people tonight, especially the opposition—the Conservatives and the NDP—are talking about

smart meters. I believe many people are listening tonight. Many people listened to them, and that's why many people out there are confused; they confuse them by sending a wrong message about the smart meters. The intent of the smart meters is not to create jobs for some company, not to favour some group of people or some technological people. The smart meter is important for this era, the technological era. The meter we have right now is 100 years old. It cannot do the job. The smart meter can read 24 hours, the timing of the consumption, and then separate the pricing, because every time has different pricing. I heard many speakers from the opposition speaking about forcing people and that people cannot afford it. The cost is going to be very minimum, and people are not going to feel it; they are going to save more. If they choose to follow the steps and they read the smart meter and take advantage of lower prices at lower-peak times, they're going to save more.

The member from Niagara Centre was talking about the guy who has the restaurant, with a freezer, a walk-in cooler, who has so much energy-using equipment. But you know, you don't have to turn it off and on. The smart meter will give them the reading night and day, and then this restaurant will definitely save more time and more money as we go on a daily basis.

I know many people are confused because of the messages coming from the opposition not telling them the right things. The right thing is about conserving energy, conserving hydro. The smart meter will give us that chance. As I mentioned, if you want to do it more, you can monitor it. You can take advantage of the time and use your laundry, use your iron, use your vacuum whenever you want to. If you don't want, automatically you get the discount too.

I think our government is on the right track. We keep investing in energy, producing more energy, unlike the past governments.

I want to tell you, we invested more than \$1 billion in the Niagara station in order to produce 1.6 billion kilowatts. It's an important step, and all of it is green energy, clean energy. It's very important.

I also heard many speakers talking about coal energy. All the statistics show us and all the experts in that field couldn't give us directions on how we can have clean energy that comes from coal generation. They must be closed, because it's important to protect the health of our people in this province. It's very important to protect our health, the health of the people who trusted us and put us in government. That's what we promised the people we would do, and we are going to deliver.

It's important to talk about the green energy. Clean energy comes from clean sources, like wind generation, wind turbines, water, nuclear. Our investment in the Bruce nuclear station is \$4.6 billion to create more than 2,500 megawatts, which is important to feed the demand of the people of this province. That is our direction. We are investing in our stations to create more energy to fill the demand that the people of Ontario are looking for.



I know many people were talking about closing factories here and closing places there. I heard the Premier this morning talking about it too, after the Leader of the Opposition asked that question. One of the elements is the cost, but not all of it, not all the facts; it's a part of it. The strategy of our government, our ministry, is to work with those factories, those industries, to see how we can maintain the jobs, preserve the jobs, with our support, with our investment. That's exactly why we are investing in the auto industry: to maintain many jobs in this province.

I know the question of GM is being talked about on a daily basis. That's not our fault; it's not because of our government. If it was our government, if it was Ontario, you wouldn't see the Toyota plant opening in Woodstock, you wouldn't see the CAMI expansion in Woodstock. You would not see Honda thinking about coming to Ontario.

According to all the statistics and studies, many companies want to come to Ontario. Ontario is the right place to open, the right place to invest, because Ontario offers good health care, good education and sustainable energy. You see, this government invested in energy, invested in health care, invested in education. Those elements bring all the companies, all the factories, all the industries to this province to invest.

Bill 21 is important. It's not going to be forced and we're not choking people with it. We said from the beginning that we're trying to create a culture of conservation by educating people. Education is the only way we can proceed. Our government, our ministry, is taking the right direction. We can see it.

I was in my constituency office the other day. We have a restaurant beside the office. One gentleman stopped me and he was upset about smart meters, because he had been listening to the Leader of the Opposition talk about it: "It's going to cost more to install." He came and asked me. When I explained to him, he was happy about it. He thanks our government, because we believe in the future, we believe in the technology. Technology is the right way. That's why we believe in the people of this province, that's why we're investing in universities and colleges, that's why we're investing in research and innovation, that's why we're investing in post-secondary education: because we want to create some kind of technological society to lead us for the next century.

I know the member from Trinity-Spadina doesn't believe in technology. They don't believe in updating our economy.

**Interjection:** Candles.

**Mr. Ramal:** Well, candles don't work any more. If you want to have a factory, you have to have energy. If you want to have technology, you have to create some kind of energy—sustainable energy, affordable energy. Many people are afraid about the cost. We said, yes, the cost is a great element. That's why we're bringing the smart meters into effect: to help us, to help the people who want to conserve.

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I think we're going in the right direction. We can see that when we go to events, when we talk to people, when we engage in talk. Many people came to us to ask for good government: "For a long time, we didn't have a government that listened to us." When we go to schools, people are happy because we've created stability among the teachers, the parents and the administration. Everybody is happy. Everybody is working together.

When we go to universities and colleges, they've told us many times that they are happy to be in that system, because for a long time they didn't have a government working with them, listening to them, investing in their situation.

The McGuinty government is investing in the community, but in a different way. I believe that Bill 21 is part of our vision, part of our strategy to build this province in a sustainable method.

**Mr. Marchese:** In a sustainable method?

**Mr. Ramal:** Yes, sustainable.

**Mr. Marchese:** Keep holding that candle.

**Mr. Ramal:** People many times talk about—

**Mr. Marchese:** Candles.

**Mr. Ramal:** You want to talk about candles? I used to work in a grocery store, and when the Conservative government was in power, we sold a lot of candles, my friend, because a blackout was expected every minute, every day. Since we've come to power, the candle doesn't exist. Now the candle is just being bought for special occasions, happy occasions, not a sad occasion. That's because we have a vision about electricity in this province. We're investing in this area.

I'm happy to support this bill, and I hope my colleague across the way will support us in our strategy, because we believe we're on the right track.

**Mr. Marchese:** You've got five more minutes. Don't give up your time. Don't give up.

**Mr. Ramal:** I'm not going to give up, because I believe in this cause. I believe in conservation. Do you know what? I'm going to keep talking because, hopefully, one time you are going to be convinced.

I know many people listen to us. I want to tell you something. Hopefully, they now understand the function of a smart meter, not how you've confused them for the last couple of hours. Smart meters are the right way to go.

We don't just depend on the smart meter. We also depend on continued education, on holding energy forums in the malls, the schools—wherever we go.

**Mr. Marchese:** Are you going to be spending money for education?

**Mr. Ramal:** I want to tell you something. That's why we were elected: to give our time and tell people what we think, tell them about our strategy. That doesn't cost money; it costs our energy, because we believe in this cause. That's why we're going to do it, not because we're looking for money. We're looking to the future of this province, to maintain the future of the province. The only way you can maintain it is by conserving energy.

**Mr. Marchese:** But you've got to educate the public.

**Mr. Ramal:** Definitely. But you know what? We wouldn't have to do this stuff if we had a government in the past that invested money in energy, but they didn't. They didn't do that. That's very important.

Also, when the NDP government was in power, and Mr. Hampton was the Minister of Energy back then, instead of connecting us with Manitoba, with a lower cost of energy, they went and bought land in a rain forest. Now we have a rain forest, but we don't have energy in Ontario. When you stand up, you should explain to the people of this province why, 14 years later, we don't have energy.

The member for Trinity-Spadina had a chance, but he's just trying to confuse the public. They have no vision. They don't believe in technology. They don't believe in clean energy. They're talking about closure, talking about this and this, but when they talk about a plan, I don't see a plan. What's your plan?

**Mr. Marchese:** But your bill has a plan, right?

**Mr. Ramal:** I believe we have a plan. It's a step in the right direction. That's why we're going to continue to be a great advocate in this government in terms of creating clean energy, green energy. We're going to continue educating the public about the importance—

**Mr. Marchese:** How are you going to do that?

**Mr. Ramal:** By talking today, by going to visit many locations, to stakeholders, by introducing special light bulbs, LED lighting, many things. Also, as I was listening to it the other day, our government and the federal government will invest money, will give you rebate money, if you change your windows.

**Mr. Marchese:** Are you guys doing that?

**Mr. Ramal:** I believe so. Yes, we do. I don't have it here, but it's already in a plan, my friend. You can go back and ask for it and you'll get it. You have to have an assessment of your house before you change your windows and doors. Then, when you change them, you'll monitor how much energy you save, and you get rebates from the government. It's just a plan. It's not in the bill that's before us; it's before this time. Anyway, it's in place. You can go back to it and check it and you can get a discount if you're going to change your windows and doors.

We are trying to educate people in this way. We have to—

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** How much is it going to cost to change the windows and doors?

**Mr. Ramal:** Well, many people are doing it. Sometimes the door is falling apart and you have to do it anyway. If you have to change it anyway, it's a chance you have to take advantage of. I'm not telling people to go change them. If they have to change them, they have a chance to save some money. I'm not forcing people to change, but there's a way to save energy and also to save some money.

I'm going to go back to commend the minister for her hard work, for her conviction and her leadership in this cause, her leadership because she believes in it and is not

just doing it for political reasons. Before, when she was a parliamentary assistant, she travelled the province, and now I believe her parliamentary assistant, the great member from Peterborough, follows in her steps to continue the message to the people of Ontario, to continue educating people. I believe by educating we are going to create that culture we're looking for—the parliamentary assistant, the minister and our government.

Therefore, I believe we're on the right track. Before I finish, I wish that the Conservatives and the NDP would support this initiative and show leadership once on change, vote to support the bill and show the people of Ontario that Conservatives and NDP care about energy, care about conservation, care about the vision we have for this province to create more clean energy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Munro:** I found the previous speaker to be quite informative except for a couple of key issues that I think need clarification.

One of the things about the smart meters that I don't think he commented on was the fact that this is only for households, which represent about a third of the total usage in the province. While we're talking about the kind of personal cost that Ontarians would have to undertake, it's estimated to be initially in the area of 800,000 homes, which would be somewhere between \$350 million and \$400 million. People need to understand that that translates into about \$8 a month. When you start to look at the investment of the \$8 a month, and the speaker also referred to the fact that you now have the choice of undertaking certain household functions during the night to take advantage of the changes in the pricing structure—I think people need to look at the \$8 a month, the fact that they're going to have to adopt a nocturnal domestic lifestyle and the fact that they're going to have to invest in household appliances that have timers so they don't have to have that nocturnal lifestyle. I think it's really important to understand that a smart meter is only going to be effective if you're prepared to pay for all of those changes, both financially and otherwise. When you look at that kind of investment vis-à-vis the savings you're going to get, I think it bears a great deal more reflection.

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**Mr. Marchese:** I thank the member from London-Fanshawe for shedding some light on this bill. I remind him and his party that this bill is called the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, and I dare to venture that anyone who calls a bill the Energy Conservation Leadership Act—it suggests to me there is nothing in it, that it is anything but leadership, because if indeed there was leadership, they wouldn't have to say it or name it. Because there's nothing in it to suggest there's leadership in any conservation measures, they have to pretend there is, and that's why they call it the Energy Conservation Leadership Act.

There is potential for energy conservation plans to be developed for public sector agencies, but no details about when and no details about what the plans would require.



The provisions tying conservation and energy efficiency to government procurement are weak or non-existent. Furthermore, requiring public agencies to consider energy efficiency and conservation in making capital investments is hardly prescriptive. There is nothing in this bill that requires anybody to do anything. It's hard to believe we're going to send this to committee to discuss what the bill may or may not do, given that we're not debating anything concrete. There is nothing in the bill. There is nothing that says—for example, in Quebec, another province that is not short of electricity, Quebec engaged in a strategy to start retrofitting literally dozens of apartment buildings in downtown Montreal this summer. Why? Because like apartment buildings in Ontario that were built in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, they don't have very good insulation. Bring something like that.

Talk to us about how you're changing the building code to keep heat in and to keep the cold out. Talk to us about those concrete suggestions and we could say, "Yeah, there's something," good or bad, but you've got nothing, absolutely nothing, in this bill. It's not leadership.

**Mr. Ruprecht:** I found the comments by the member from London—Fanshawe very interesting. He was clear on one thing: He said Bill 21 is a major step, it's a major building block in Ontario's comprehensive plan to build a conservation culture in Ontario. The question that he answered to my satisfaction was, will Ontario benefit from smart metering? I think this is the major question that we would ask ourselves this evening. Will we benefit from Bill 21? Will we benefit from smart metering? The answer that the member from London—Fanshawe gave us tonight was very clear: a resounding yes.

I know he discussed the matter of the savings. He said that every dollar invested in smart metering will return \$1.50 in benefits. That's just the beginning. That doesn't even address the issue of a comprehensive energy conservation culture. He talked about the energy forum. Every member in this Legislature has been asked by the Minister of Energy—we are ready to come to every riding and support you in your determination to help every Ontarian to conserve energy. The member from Trinity—Spadina had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Energy, he had the opportunity to have a conservation energy forum in his riding. Do you know what he said? Did he say yes to it? No; he said no. He said no. I want to tell you something interesting. I will tell you the reason why this member from Trinity—Spadina said no to the energy forum: because he thought politically that was not a smart thing to do. I hope you will change your mind.

**Mr. Miller:** I think I finally figured out the Liberal energy policy, and that is they're going to wait for enough businesses to close and then they'll be able to shut down those coal-fired electric generating stations because the demand will be reduced so significantly. Today we heard of the tragic closing of the Cascades paper mill in Thunder Bay, a loss of some 550 jobs. The primary reason for the shutdown was the cost of energy. Since January of this year, we see that some 10 paper and

pulp production mills have closed in Ontario, with the loss of some 2,300 jobs, primarily in northern Ontario, with a warning that another 12 mills are at risk of closing, which could mean another 7,500 lost full-time jobs in northern Ontario.

I understand why the member from London—Fanshawe was talking so much about—he seemed to be referring a lot to candles, because people are probably going to need candles if the government keeps following this electricity plan that they're on.

I note that the reason our energy critic, the member from Nipissing—Pembroke, is not here to do his leadoff speech is that he is in the community of Atikokan and in Thunder Bay, where I'm sure he's hearing and talking to the people about their energy concerns. Thunder Bay is very much concerned. I know that the town of Atikokan was not happy about the past Minister of Energy's comments referring to them as neanderthals; I've seen a number of e-mails regarding that comment.

One part of this bill that has been talked about a lot is the smart meters. I can see I only have 10 seconds, so I'll have to save that for another hit.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London—Fanshawe has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Ramal:** I want to thank the members from York North, Trinity—Spadina, Davenport and Parry Sound—Muskoka for their comments.

I want to go back again to talk about the smart meter. You know, it's very important. I was part of the Bill 100 committee that travelled the province of Ontario listening to the people. Bill 100 opened up the partnership between the government and private industry to help us to create more energy in this province. I think that bill was a great step toward creating more energy. Today, we're talking about smart meters.

The member for Trinity—Spadina was talking about clotheslines. Some bylaws don't allow you to do many things, because the clothesline—I'm referring to what you said a few minutes ago. I just want to remind you about this issue.

The member from York North was asking about why we have to invest money: Why do we have to have a smart meter? Why? Because we live in 2005, a technological time. We have to update the technology. The old meters don't read anymore, don't work anymore. It's old technology. Smart meters have been used in Europe for the last 20 years. We're talking about important things about this issue. You can read the meter from your headquarters. You can price every hour from your headquarters. This is technology. I don't know why the opposition is still talking about it. You're talking about our initiative. We said we want to do it. We're not just going to talk. By 2007, we can install 800,000 smart meters, and hopefully by 2010 we'll install the whole province of Ontario. This is our commitment. We're acting, not just talking, because we believe in it. We want to work toward it by action.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?



**Mr. Barrett:** I'll speak to Bill 21. As we've heard, it's been titled the Energy Conservation Leadership Act. I'd like to address the importance of conservation as part of any responsible energy plan, a plan that reduces the impact on the environment. We have to recognize the importance of maintaining strong domestic supply, and of course any plan has to deal with the management of electricity costs. We've heard the debate this evening, and as yet I don't see much of a plan; I don't see much of a macro plan, certainly a plan that one would expect from the government of the province of Ontario.

I'd like to perhaps focus on the micro planning. I want to put it partly in the context of farming. The minister and a number of speakers have talked about what I consider this government's misguided coal closure program. If I have time, I would like to address that.

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Clearly, conservation is an important part of any energy plan, particularly in this day and age of dwindling supply, and not only the dwindling supply of electricity in Ontario. In North America, we have a dwindling supply of natural gas, and diesel and gasoline are threatened. Hence, in part, we see the headlines. I see the headlines in the House today about businesses closing, paper mills closing.

The problem is that after more than two years of talking, this government still has no energy plan to speak of, save for the direction toward shutting down 25% of the electricity in the province. That would be done in—we hear different dates—2007 or 2009, the closing down of coal-fired electricity generation. Meanwhile, we have a bill before us tonight, Bill 21, the main plank of which reannounces, for the umpteenth time, the imposition of smart meters on electricity consumers. It has me puzzled.

We've had two years of talking about this now, the imposition of mandatory smart meters. I didn't hear any figures tonight. We still really have no answers on how much this will cost and what the foreseeable results will be if this is implemented. I understand the initial cost will be high. I wish the government had worked this out and told people about it. Obviously, the cost will be transferred to the consumer, and that's a consumer who is already struggling to pay current bills, bills that are only heading higher as this government continues to cut off the supply of electricity.

I do raise the issue of our farm communities and rural residents. This bill is another example of how this government manages to continue to ignore the challenges—the needs, if you will—of rural residents and our farmers. It's well known that Ontario farmers are already having difficulty financing capital expenditures with the permission of the banks, let alone affording capital expenditures, due to very low commodity prices and soaring input costs like electricity, for example. Obviously, smart meters, in the short run, impose added costs on these people, who already cannot afford to pay their bills.

I'd like us to take a look at the situation with dairy farmers. A couple of years ago it was estimated that electricity costs run at about \$450 per cow per year. Margins

are very slim. Increases in costs for electricity will continue, and this can only add to the burden on this particular sector. Along comes the McGuinty government, telling our dairy producers, "We can help you manage your electricity costs with these handy mandatory smart meters that will be added to your monthly bill."

I don't know whether any members of the House have recently visited a dairy operation. You have to understand that dairy cattle cannot wait for the smart meter off-peak hours to be milked. Our former energy critic posed this question last spring: "How can a dairy farmer in Ontario shift demand to those off-peak times you talked about?" "The cows have to be milked and you're putting them out of business."

I will point out, however, that in a submission to the Ontario Energy Board just a few years ago, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture raised the issue of smart meters. I'd like to quote the OFA.

"Farms tend to use electricity more at off-peak times than other users." They divided farms into three categories: low-volume users, high-volume users and average users. "Low-volume farm electricity users will not be able to recoup costs of the change to smart meters. Higher-volume farm users may achieve substantial savings using technical methods that do not require smart meters. For most farms the residual savings after non-meter-driven changes will not warrant the cost of smart meters."

The submission goes on, and again quoting from that particular organization, "OFA believes that smart meters should only be required on accounts where the electricity use is so large that the residual potential conservation and load shifting gains after non-meter-driven savings have been implemented are sufficient to cover the costs of new meters and"—the accompanying—"billing systems."

There are other approaches; there are other ways. There's information I picked up this morning, actually, at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture annual meeting. This is a brochure from Hydro One. Again, in going through this, obviously we all realize how important it is for agriculture to remain competitive, just as it is with our auto industry and with our pulp and paper mills.

"Supply and price changes are coming to the electricity market that could affect farm energy input costs," and I think that's a bit of an understatement. I do advise anyone involved in agriculture that there are some videos—I understand they're very good—that give some helpful hints for on-farm energy conservation. I also know Hydro One itself has some excellent information. I make mention of this particular brochure. I would suggest to anyone who has an interest, there's a Web site, [www.hydroone.com](http://www.hydroone.com).

I would like to give a few examples of alternatives that are available for the more efficient use of energy, things that should be considered: obviously, replacing old equipment, renovating existing equipment or constructing a new facility if need be. There are energy-efficient alternatives. They do save money down the road, and we know down the road the cost of energy will continue to rise. It's so important for all involved in the business to



be involved. Any uninformed decisions today, especially given what we're seeing coming from the McGuinty government as far as rising electricity costs, and probably just a serious unpredictable energy cost—it's very important to be made aware of some of these helpful hints. There are a lot of things that can be done beyond relying solely on smart meters or on a piece of legislation like this to bring in smart meters.

Other considerations: There are two categories, load reduction and load shifting techniques. Load reduction gets a little technical, but that refers to replacing a piece of equipment such as lighting. I look at the lights in this particular room. I don't know whether many people watching this debate on television would realize just how many light bulbs there are in this particular room. I know there are four chandeliers. I might ask members opposite to join with me in counting the light bulbs. There are four very large chandeliers, as we in the Legislature would know. Each chandelier has, gosh, something like 32 lights, as I recall. There are four of them. There are 128 light bulbs right there. They're not the twisty light bulbs. I don't know whether these are energy-efficient light bulbs or not. I offer a challenge to this government: If these four chandeliers and these 128 light bulbs are not efficient, and we have speaker after speaker admonishing, lecturing and suggesting to the public how important it is for them to change their light bulbs to something a little more energy-efficient, they might take a look 40 feet up and decide whether those light bulbs have been changed or not.

That's only four chandeliers. There are a number of smaller chandeliers in this room, and this is one room in the Ontario Legislature, albeit a very large room. This room is actually as high as my barn, and granted, it will take a fair bit of electricity, if this is old-fashioned technology, to light this particular room.

Speaker, as you will know, and if anyone's counting, there are another 10 chandeliers in this room, smaller chandeliers. If you add up all the light bulbs, there are another 130 light bulbs. I look at the members' gallery and I look at the gallery behind the Speaker's chair; perhaps 40 or 50 other lights. We have something like 200 light bulbs here. I do ask this government, I ask the Legislative Assembly to determine whether this government is actually putting its money where its mouth is with respect to the particular room where—

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Talk to the Legislative Assembly, not the government.

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**Mr. Barrett:** As I've indicated, I challenge this government and the Legislative Assembly. Certainly we took the bull by the horns several years ago with respect to the well-lit bureaucratic office towers on Bay and Wellesley owned by the Ontario government, leased by the Ontario government, and measures were taken to eliminate those lights in the evening when people were not using those facilities. Again, I've left the challenge before the Legislature.

It's a challenge that we offer to our farmers. Essentially, given the direction of this debate and the intention of this bill, by changing light bulbs you save energy, you save electricity and you save money. I use that example to try to better explain what I consider a fairly technical term, load reduction. For example, all told, I guess there are about 200 light bulbs in this room. Maybe to make it easier, if you take 100 light bulbs, 60-watt incandescent bulbs, operating 12 hours a day, and replace them with 14 fluorescent fixtures—these would be 69-watt tubes; two lamps and a ballast—this replacement reduces the peak load by 5,000 watts. That's five kilowatts. So, if we have old-fashioned bulbs here, perhaps installed by Edison himself—who knows? I look at some of the paperweights. Mine says 1901. I know the member for Halton has a paperweight, a clamp, that says 1870. Whether the lighting goes back that far, I doubt it, but I do offer this. I'm in opposition. Our role is to raise issues and to present some ideas and information. I leave that with those who are responsible. In this room alone, according to this load reduction formula, we could replace the bulbs and reduce the energy consumption by 10 kilowatts.

The other very important concept, and this is a concept that is being communicated to farmers in Ontario, is load shifting. Essentially, load shifting involves operating non-essential equipment like feed preparation systems, for example, when very little or no other equipment is operating. Running feed systems when you're milking at the same time, and you've got all the lights and all the fans on in a barn, means that you have electrical demand at its peak. Obviously, this will result in a significantly larger demand charge than could be achieved by shifting the operation of the feed system to times when less equipment is operating. This will reduce the total peak demand for that month and obviously the associated charge.

This is some of the information. This was put together for farmers by Hydro One. I think there are some good ideas, some great ways for farmers to save some energy.

Replacement of equipment: Obviously, so many modern farm buildings have electrical motors, they have fans. If they're not up to date, replace them. I use the dairy example. There are some statistics here as far as energy savings. I'll just go down the list: milk heat reclaimer, 20% to 50% savings; well water pre-cooler or plate cooler, 25% savings; variable speed drive vacuum pump, 50% savings. If you put a timer on your water heater, you can save 15%, and with an energy-efficient water bowl or a water bowl that doesn't require any energy at all, the savings can be 10% up to 100%.

Greenhouses: I visited a number of very large greenhouse operations a few weekends ago down in the Leamington area. Again, savings in electricity of 10% to 50% can be achieved with modern refrigeration systems and controls. Natural and dual ventilation—natural and fan—can achieve savings of 80% to 100%. Any modern greenhouse, as opposed to a hothouse, has a boiler system. Again, with efficiencies, with more modern instrumen-

tation and controls, with heat recovery systems, you can achieve energy savings of 5% to 25%.

Within our farm economy, there remains a very serious potential for energy generation through renewable fuels, obviously wind turbines, something that is moving along quite vigorously down in the Houghton area. In my particular riding, you really can't drive around down there without seeing very large gravel trucks and cement trucks building these pads, which are something like 15 feet deep, to hold the turbines. As opposed to wind power, which is used to generate just electricity, solar can be used for electricity, heat and hot water. There are also biogas, biomass, and in some cases, flowing water.

Another point I want to make, and it's something that's completely ignored in this legislation, with its focus, really a rifle-shot focus, on smart meters is that there's no mention of net metering systems. Net metering is required for independent operators to produce electricity through wind or solar. Without net meters, they have no way of tapping into the grid and selling their electricity.

I would be remiss if I did not voice the question that many may be asking: Why is this government closing down energy supply when there is so much talk by this government about an energy shortage and ever-present and looming increasing energy costs? The province of Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America that is actually reducing its generation of electricity. Conservation is crucial when you're operating in a challenging environment like that, where the powers that be are actually reducing the generation and hence the supply of energy—hardly a balanced or credible energy plan. Demand reduction is even more important when you've got a government like that running the place. Demand reduction, like conservation measures that I've heard others talk about this evening, is important, but so is supply, and as every householder knows, so is demand, and most importantly, so is price. It's simple economics.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being 9:30, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
20	985	1	50	our highways. We are moving ahead with our fare card



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
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Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)

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Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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